

B<sup>P</sup> H O P K I N S's

Fourth, and Last,

VOLUME

O F

*Discourses and Sermons.*

THE END

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*Tanner*

*855.*

The Fourth (and Last)

VOLUME  
O F  
DISCOURSES  
OR  
SERMONS  
ON  
Several Scriptures.

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By *EZEKIEL HOPKINS*,  
Late Lord Bishop of *London-derry*.

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L O N D O N :

Printed by *H. Clark*, for *J. Robinson*,  
*A. and J. Churchill*, *J. Taylor*, and  
*J. Wyat*, 1696.

*Thom. Tanner*



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THE  
PREFACE,  
GIVING

An Account of these Di-  
scourses, and of the Ex-  
cellent Author thereof.

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Christian Reader,

**A**N old Friend and Acquaintance  
of the very Reverend Author of  
the following Sermons and Di-  
scourses, in honour of his Name  
and Memory, (though he accepteth no Man's  
Person, neither can give flattering Titles)  
saith, upon the occasion of their being  
Printed and Published, as followeth, viz,  
That there have been Three Volumes of  
Sermons and Discourses sent forth into

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## The P R E F A C E.

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the Publick before these have appeared, and not any one of them unprefaced to ; but in none of these Prefaces hath he met with any thing to convey down the just Character of this our great Man, and his Manner, and Ministry to Posterity ; He will make an Experiment therefore, if any thing may be said (he saith not ad-ed) for, hitherto, nothing hath been said to render the account of this Amiable Person and his Useful Labours amongst us to after Ages, besides the Testimony of his Gifts and Graces in his Books, so familiar amongst us ; for by these, though he be dead, he yet speaketh ; his Works praise him in the Gates, and his Remembrance shall be blessed. Many will bear Witness, the Name of our Author was not unknown, but celebrated in this our great City, in its Suburbs, in our Lines of Communication, and within our Bills of Mortality, when he for several Years lived and laboured with great acceptance and success in these places : Ask in the Town and Parish of Hackney, how much Good was done by Mr. Hopkins's Lectures, especially amongst the richer sort of Inhabitants, and the younger sort at the Schools there, and especially those that were descended

## The PREFACE.

ed from good Families. If you believe me not, ask from Jerusalem to Illyricum; from Oxon to London, from London to Exon, if you please, from one London to another, even unto London-derry in Ireland, where was his Top-preferment, and I have been assured his last Works were more than the first: So that we have found him that faithful and wise Servant his Lord had made Ruler over his Houshold, to give them their Meat, in due season. Indeed, by his exalted Name, I ever took him to be none of our smaller Prophets, nor of the Patres minorum Gentium: In his first education, and at his first appearance in the Grammar-School, he soon signalized himself, none of his Age and Stature being well able to keep pace with him; at his coming unto the University, it was by times taken notice of his Stock of Grammar, and all good Learning, especially in the learned Languages, and his Studies and Manners were such that he rendred himself in the College both much a Scholar and much a Gentleman, and was chosen out from amongst others to Instruction and Government therein, and particularly the Instruction and Government of some of several Young Gentlemen,

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## The PREFACE.

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and some descended from some of our Noble and most Honourable Families in our Kingdom and Nation. In the Churches of Christ, unto the Service whereof he was never slack, when invited, and called, his very First-fruits were promising, and his First-fruits being holy, the Lump was also holy. The Crouds in Hackney-Church, in St. Mary Woolnoth Lombard-street, at Exon, at Dublin, at Raphoe, at London-derry, and last at St. Mary Aldermanbury in our own City, declare him a Master-workman, the Preacher that was wise, and that sought out acceptable words: And his Words were as profitable as they were acceptable. By the Subjects of the Four Volumes of Sermons, you will be able to do more than make a Conjecture, you will take some Measures of his Parts, and the disposition of his Mind, of his Studies and Ministerial Endeavours, with the blessed Seals which were put thereunto.

I will only further (as to my part here) in his Honour, commend to your perusal, in special, this Fourth Volume of his Sermons and Discourses: The Contents will give you the Account of what Materials

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## The P R E F A C E.

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rials they consist, and to what Uses and Improvements they were directed and applied. But I further take liberty to say, Here are, in these Discourses now handled by him, both the Commoda and the Accommoda, things profitable in themselves, and seasonable to our present Times and Debates, Verba super Rotas, some of the Author's Golden Apples in Pictures of Silver: They never knew our Author, that knew him not to be as acute and solid in his Polemick Discourses, as he was accurate and fervent in his Practical and Ordinary Sermons. And let but the Christian Reader take the first Discourse in this Book, on Phil. 2. 12, 13. and read but with due Caution and Observation, and he will soon think there will not need more be said to stay and quiet the Minds of Men on the controverted Points of Liberty, or the Power of Nature, and the Interests of the Grace of God in our Salvation. He hath also happily herein taken up the Question, and proved Repentance and Faith are neither prejudicial to the free Grace of God and the Father, nor in any-wise derogatory unto the Merits of Jesus his Son: As also fully proved we are far from being justified as soon as elected or redeemed. In  
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the Second Part, he hath happily added and proved, that a temperament of the fear of a Just and Sin-revenging God, is consistent with, and necessary to be joined unto our highest Attainments in the joyful Sense of the Love and Favour of God, and the fullest Assurances of Heaven and Salvation we have in this Life, and hath herein cut the Sinews of the Antinomian Errour, on the contrary part, and without any Noise or Clamour. In the Third Part, you will find and be much pleased with, and, I hope, equally benefited by his very Pious and Plain Treatise of the Nature and Offices of Conscience, the rather because the Corruptions and Defilements of it being so distinctly opened, and what it is, and of what Importance to get and to keep a clear Conscience, with many necessary Directions and Helps in order thereunto, very proper to the Times wherein so many have made Shipwrack of Faith, and of a Good Conscience. The next Discourse is of Instancy and Constancy in Holy Prayer, not only as a Negotium cum Deo, but Heaven in ordinary and perfect Hearts-ease, whilst we are here upon Earth. And the last is an elaborate, though short Exercitation and Treatise of the Divine Omnipresence, a Me-

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## The P R E F A C E.

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*Meditation prepared to render all the foregoing Parts of the Book more beneficial to us, no Argument being in its own Nature more awakening and awful to an intelligent and diligent Reader. The rest you are beholden to Providence, and the Pen of a ready Writer for ; but what is written, was unquestionably spoken, and with a great m<sup>o</sup>th, by a very Reverend Prelate, now in that Kingdom, (a great Admirer, Follower, and dear Brother of ours, deceased) in the Close of his excellent Sermon, Preached in St. Mary Aldermanbury-Church, upon Coloss. 3. 1,2,3,4, Verses, June 24. 1690. in the Close whereof, having Christ's and our Resurrection he proceeds, saying,*

This was the Doctrin of the Apostles, and the Faith of the Primitive Christians : And that this Faith did animate them against the Fears of Death, and enable them to meet that King of Terrors with Undaunted Resolutions ; and it is this which still Buoys up the sinking Spirits of Believers ; it was this which comforted this Reverend and Learned Prelate, whose Funerals was then solemnized. This supported him in his late Troubles and Afflictions, in his greatest Pains and sharp-

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## The P R E F A C E.

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sharpest Agonies. He often discoursed with me on this Subject. He fixed his Thoughts upon the Glorious Resurrection, and set his Affections on the things above ; and with the Joyful Hope and Expectation of them he was enabled to bear the Torments of his Body with great Patience, and wonderful Magnanimity ; and was not in the least terrified with the Thoughts of Death. It was not φοβερῶν φοβεροτάτου to him ; he spoke of it without Concern, and triumphed over all its Terrors, and welcomed it as a Joyful Messenger, calling him to his Dormitory till the Resurrection. And he died full of this Faith, and did, with Job, say, Though his Body were destroyed with Worms, it should rise again to a Blessed Immortality, and in the same Flesh he should see God ; and through the Merits and Intercession of Christ, he doubted not to Partake of the Things above.

But you expect I should say more of him ; and, indeed, he highly deserves it, and much, very much, is due to the Memory of such an excellent Prelate ; who, for Learning and Pi-

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ty, for Wisdom and Courage, for Humility and Meekness, for Charity and Hospitality, was one of the greatest Ornaments of the Church and Nation wherein he lived. But unless I had his own Eloquence, I should not attempt it. A sorrowful Heart, a thick Pencil, and a trembling Hand, will but overshadow and darken the Lines of so fair a Piece; and therefore I must beg of you, who knew him in *Oxford*, in *Hackney*, in *Exeter*, and in this City, where he was so much followed, applauded, and admired, to set him in his true Light to the World, and give him that great Character which he so justly deserved, while I only mention the great Honour and Veneration we had for him in *Ireland*, in which Kingdom he soon made himself famous, and, for a Learned and Elegant Sermon, which I heard him Preach at his first coming, (and which was afterward Printed) I saw him Embraced by the greatest Prelates, and courted to stay in that Country, and was soon after made Dean, and then Bishop of *Raphoe*, and afterward, most deservedly, translated to *Derry*. In the first of which

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which Bishopricks (as I am informed) he spent about a Thousand Pounds in Buildings and other Improvements : And, in the last, he was at a very great Expence to Beautifie and Adorn his Cathedral, and in furnishing it with Organs and Massy Plate ; and, in both, he was a great Precedent of Piety and Holiness. He was a burning and a shining Light. He knew that μόνος εστιν λέγοντος τρόπος καὶ μὴ λόγος, and did therefore preach loudly by example. His Actions were Instructive Sermons, and his Strict Life and Unblameable Conversation had great Influence on all about him.

At his Table he was piously pleasant and religiously ingenious, and doubly feasted all who did eat with him ; for he had a clear Head and solid Judgment, a quick Fancy and a flowing Wit, and was every-way accomplished for Address and for Discourse, and was so Courteous and Affable, so Gentile, and so Obliging, so Instructive, and Communicative, that all who conversed with him, loved and admired him ; and though he kept a very Noble and Hospi-

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Hospitable House, yet was it famous for Regularity and Order. And in the midst of the greatest Plenty, Gravity and Sobriety were most strictly observed. It was indeed a Temple and an Oratory, for in it Prayers and Praises, Catechising and Reading the Scripture, were never omitted. He constantly expounded it to his Family, explained some part of the Lessons, and made short, but rare Observations upon them, and, beside the Publick Prayers, he was very often at his Private Devotions, and spent much time in Divine Meditations.

Thus did he behave himself in his House; thus did he Instruct his Family, and bring his Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord: And, if you follow him to the Pulpit, you'll find him there constantly, once a Sunday, while his Health permitted it, and surely all who heard him will say, his Sermons were Learned and Eloquent, Pious and Methodical, and, as his *Motto* was, *Aut suavitate aut vi*, he, either by sweet Discourses and charming Exhortations, or by strength of Reason and powerful Arguments, drew many to Christ. He  
never

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## The P R E F A C E.

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never omitted that Duty, but preached in his Throne when he was not able to ascend the Pulpit : And, for his Excellency in that Noble Faculty, he was celebrated by all Men. He was followed and admired in all Places where he lived, and was justly esteemed one of the best Preachers of our Age. And his Discourses always smelt of the Lamp ; they were very elaborate and well digested. He had a Noble Library, and delighted in it, and was, as *Tertullian* says of *Irenaeus*, *Omnium Doctrinarum curiosissimus explorator*. He was a good Linguist, and excelled in Polemick and Casuistical Divinity. Many flocked to him to have their Doubts resolved ; and he gave Light and Comfort to clouded and afflicted Consciences ; and was admirably accomplished with many other Parts of useful Learning.

And, if you consider him as a Bishop, you will own, that God had blessed him with Wisdom and Sagacity, with Zeal and Courage, with Temper and Moderation, and all other necessary Virtues for a Gouverour and Ruler in the Church, and surely none was more careful

## The P R E F A C E.

ful of his Diocess, being constantly resident, and bringing in learned and ingenious Men into all Livings in his Gift and Patronage : And was a most tender and indulgent , yet strict and vigilant Ruler of his Clergy. He always treated them as Brethren and Friends, with all kindness and respect , and would spare no pains to protect them in their Rights ; and used all his interest to promote them as they deserved. In a word, he was every way qualified and adorned for that great Charge ; and by constant Preaching , a wise Government, and an even and steady Hand ; by a winning Temper, an humble Courage and prudent Moderation , he gained upon Dissenters , and brought many into the Communion of our Church, having fully convinced them, that her Doctrin was Pure and Primitive , Orthodox and Apostolical : And did, upon all occasions, shew himself a wise, a learned, and a pious Bishop. He every way filled his Chair, and was an Honour to his See , and may deservedly be enrolled in the Catalogue of his learned Predecessors ; for with such has that See been blessed ever since the Reformation. And undoubtedly his Death will

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## The P R E F A C E.

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be extreamly lamented in that Country ; and sure I am the Poor will have great reason to bewail it ; for to them he was exceeding generous and charitable, and gave great Sums, every Year, amongst them, besides the Tenth of his Revenues, which he constantly laid by for such uses ; and did also allow good Yearly Pensions to Students in the University, to Ministers Widows and other distressed Persons, and did put Children to Trades , and largely contribute to the Building and Repairing of some Churches, and designed greater things, if God had spared him to return. But, alas ! he is gone, and our poor unsettled Church has an extraordinary loss in him : 'Tis a sharp Stroke, an additional Judgment to lose him now. But to God's Holy Will we must submit, as he willingly and chearfully did when Death approached : He resigned all with great Christian Courage, and discoursed Philosophically and Divinely of the Vanity and Uncertainty of all Sublunary Things , and settled all his Desires upon the Things above ; and, not long before his death, he discoursed of the Necessity and Sincerity of Repentance and Uniform Obedience in such a manner,

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## The P R E F A C E.

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ner, and inveighed with such any Holy Zeal, against the Sins of these Nations, as might make the greatest Debauchees of our Age quake and tremble to have heard him. And then, with reflecting on himself, he did, with great Grief and Sorrow, with Sighs and Tears, bewail the least Failures of his Life, and spent his Last Days in Self-examination, in Repentance and Prayer, and with great Devotion received the Holy Sacrament, in which he found much Joy and Comfort, and had such Inward Peace and Antepasts of Bliss, that he longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ, and did very often beg of God to take him : And, on Thursday last, his Prayer was heard, and God, in his Mercy, took him out of the Troubles of this Life, and called him up amongst the Blessed, and changed his Fading Mitre into a Crown of Eternal Glory.

What then remains, but that we imitate his Virtue, honour his Memory, and commit his Body to his Dormitory, there to sleep till the Resurrection, when he and all who have been diligent and industrious, painful and laborious in the Ministry, and have

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been Precedents of Piety and Holiness, of Justice and Integrity, will meet their Flocks with Joy and Comfort, and for turning them to Righteousness, shall shine as Stars for ever and ever. Which God grant we may all do, &c.

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T A B L E  
O F T H E  
Discourses & Sermons  
I N T H I S  
V O L U M E.

PRACTICAL Christianity, Recommend-ed, urg'd and Encourag'd, in work-ing out our own Salvation: Or, A Discourse on *Philippians* 2. 12, 13. *Wherefore, my Beloved, as ye have al-ways Obeyed, not as in my Presence only, but now much more in my Absence; work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.*

The Assurance of Heaven and Salva-tion, a powerful Motive to serve God with Fear: In a Discourse on *Hebrews* 12. 28, 29. *Wherefore we ha-ving received a Kingdom that cannot be moved,*

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*moved, let us have Grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a Consuming Fire.*

A Discourse of the Nature, Corruption, and Renewing of the Conscience: With Accounts of the Moment of having a Conscience void of Offence to God and Men, from *Acts* 24. 16. *Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men.*

A Discourse upon Perseverance in Prayer: With Exhortations thereunto, On *1 Thess. 5. 17. Pray without ceasing.*

A Discourse upon the Omnipresence of God: With the Improvements thereof. From *Psal. 139. 7, 8, 9, 10. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there; If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea; even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.*

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Practical

*Practical Christianity,*

RECOMMENDED,

Urg'd & Encourag'd,

In working out our own

SALVATION:

OR, A

DISCOURSE

ON

*Philippians ii. 12, 13.*

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By *EZEKIEL HOPKINS,*

Late Lord Bishop of *London-derry.*

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*L O N D O N :*

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Слово о полку Игореве

# Practical CHRISTIANITY

Recommended, Urged and Encouraged,

In Working out our own

# SALVATION.

Phil. ii. 12. 13.

*Wherefore my Beloved, as ye  
have always Obeyed, not as in  
my Presence only, but now much  
more in my Absence ; work out  
your own Salvation with Fear  
and Trembling.*

*For it is God which worketh in you,  
both to will and to do of his good  
Pleasure.*

**T**H E whole Sum of Christianity is Comprehended in two Points, in Knowledge, and in Obedience : The one is Conversant about things Supernaturally Revealed ; and the other about Duties

B 2 Super-

Intro-  
duction.

Supernaturally Performed. Now although there be so wide a difference between these two; yet where they are suffered to run on in a course, they will one fall into the other; and Gospel Revelations will make way for, and lead unto Gospel Obedience: Yea, indeed there is no Divine Truth, how Abstracted, how Sublime and Speculative soever it may seem to be, but by the help of one or two Consequences may be handed down along to clear and direct our Practice: And therefore the *Apostle* speaking of the Whole of Christi-

*I Tim. 3. 16.*  
*Thus I. I.* an Religion, calls it *The Mystery of Godliness*: *And the Truth according to Godliness*. He calls it not a Mystery and Godliness, or Truth and Godliness; but he knits and joyns them both together, the Mystery and Truth of Godliness; a Truth, yea and a Truth wrapt up in a Mystery, because discovered only by a Divine Light; and yet a Mystery of Godliness, because it is a Truth that tends to incline the Will and raise the Affections, and so direct the Conversations of Men, unto Godliness and Obedience.

And thus also in this *Chapter*, after the *Apostle* had soared up very high in those

those Transcendent Mysteries of Christ's Godhead, in the 6 verse, of his *Incarnation*, in the 7 verse, of his *Humiliation*, *Obedience* and *Passion* in the 8 verse, of his *Glory* and *Exaltation* above every thing both in Heaven and in the Earth and in Hell, 9. 10 and 11. *verses*: After he had thus soared aloft in these Transcendent Mysteries, he makes a sudden descent to the Exhortation in the Text, *Wherfore work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

This Illative Particle *wherfore* looks back as far as to the 5 verse. Where the *Apostle* Exhorts them, *that the same mind should be in them that was in Christ on* Expositio-

*Jesus*. Who though he was Essentially Equal with God, yet Mediatorily became subject unto God: Though he was in the form of God, yet he took upon him the form of a Servant, laid aside his Glory, emptied and humbled himself, and became Obedient even to the lowest Duties and to the vilest Sufferings, he was Obedient unto the Death: That is, He was Obedient to Gods Law till Death, by fulfilling of it, and he was Obedient unto God's Will in Death, by suffering of it; for which

Exinanition and Obedience, God hath highly Exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow. Now says the Apostle, be you also of the same Mind with Christ: Wherefore as he was Obedient, so be you also; do you Work, that is, Do you Obey: As he was humble, and emptied himself, be you also humble and lowly. *Work with Fear and Trembling*; That is, obey with Humility and Reverence, as the Phrase imports and is often used in Scripture: That so as Christ obtained Glory and Exaltation, you also may be Exalted and Glorified with him. *Work out your own Salvation*. For these Words come in as a Parallel with Christ: As he was obedient, so be you; as he was humble and emptied himself, so be you also humble; that so when he is Glorified, you may be Saved. *Wherefore, work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. And this I judge to be the Apostles scope in drawing this Conclusion.

In the Words, you have three Parts.

The Division of the Words.

*First*, A Duty pressed upon us by a most serious and rational Exhortation;

*Where-*

Wherefore, Work out your own Salvation.

Secondly, An express way and manner how it is to be performed, and that is, With Fear and Trembling.

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Thirdly, Here is the Reason of this Exhortation, For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

First, Here is a duty pressed upon us, and that is, To Work out our own Salvation. To explain the Words a little :

First, For *Salvation*, you may take it for the whole supernatural State of a Christian, begun here in Grace, and to be finished hereafter in Glory. And,

1.  
What Sal-  
vation is.

Secondly, To Work out this *Salvation*, is nothing but to continue and persevere in ways of Obedience, until through them, that *Salvation* that is begun here on Earth, be perfected in Heaven. To Work out our *Salvation*, therefore, implies three things :

2.  
What it is  
to work  
out Salva-  
tion.

What it  
implies.

1. *First*, Pains and Labour. *Salvation* <sup>Pains and</sup> is that which must be wrought out; it <sup>Labour.</sup> is that which will make the Soul pant and breath, yea run down with Sweat to obtain it.

2. *Secondly*, It implies Constancy and Diligence. A Christian that would work out *Salvation*, must always be employed about it. It is a Webb into which we must weave the whole Thread of our Lives. That Man that works at Salvation only by some passionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul Apostacy, and Notorious Sins, that Man will never work Salvation out. No, it must be Diligence and Constancy that must effect that.

3. *Thirdly*, It promises Success and Accomplishment also: And this is a mighty encouragment to enforce the Exhortation. Though the Work bedifficult, our Strength little, the Enemies many, and the Oppositions powerful; yet continue working, your Labour shall not be in Vain; though it be hard work, it shall not be long work; for it shall be wrought out, and what before

fore was your Work, shall be your Reward ; and what before was your Labour, shall be your Wages. And this *Salvation* that was so painful in working shall be most blessed in the Enjoyment.

Secondly, Here is the express way and manner how this Work should be done, and that is, *With Fear and Trembling*. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. Now this *Fear*, is not to be taken for a Fear of Diffidence, Perturbation or Despondency ; for this is so contrary to the Duty of working out Salvation, as that it only stupifies and dulls us : And as in other matters, so in Spirituals, it hinders both Counsels and performances. But this *Fear and Trembling*, that must qualify our Obedience, is nothing else, but an humble Self-Resignation, Self-Denyal, and a Holy awe and reverence of God, with which Humility and Reverence, the highest degree of spiritual Joy and Assurance is so far from being inconsistent, that it usually springs from it, and is built upon it. This now is meant by *Fear and Trembling*, and so the Phrase is often used in *Scripture*. So the

- Psalm 2. 12.* **the Psalmist, Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling.** It is not meant of any desponding diffident Fear, but only of an awful reverential Fear of God, joyned with Self-abasement. And so St. Paul to the Corinthians, says  
*2 Cor. 7. 15.* **of Titus, That he was received with Fear and Trembling.** There was no Reason why Titus's coming should cause Fear and Trembling, which was so much desired: Only the meaning is, they received him with Fear and Reverence. And so Servants are Commanded to be *Obedient unto their Masters:* So here,  
*Ephes. 6.5.* **Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling:** That is, Work it out with Humility, Self-Abasement and Reverence.
- 3.** *Thirdly, Here is the Reason of this Exhortation; For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* Wherein now lies the Strength of the Reason? Possibly it might seem rather to a Carnal Judgment, an incouragement to Sloath, than an incouragment to working and Obedience. For if God work in us both the Will and the Deed; What need we then be so solicitous about the accomplishment of

of our Salvation, which not so much we our selves, as God works out for us? It would rather seem to be a greater Motive for us to work, if the *Apostle* had said, God will not assist you, and therefore look to your selves. But yet there are two ways without torturing the Words, whereby we may make them confess wherein their great Strength lies. The one is by reducing this Reason to the Duty. And the other is by referring it to the manner of Performing of the Duty.

*First*, If we refer it to the Duty of working out Salvation, then the Force and Strength of it lies in the Consideration of that Aid and Assistance that God by working in us affords us, to the working out of our own Salvation. Work? *Why, Alas may some Objection.* say, How can we Work? Are not the Duties of Obedience Divine and Supernatural? And is it not an Almighty Power alone that can enable us to do what is Supernatural? Are we Omnipotent? Doth not God herein plainly seek Advantages against us, in bidding us thus to Work, who have no Hands, nor Strength to Work with?

No,

**Answer.**

No, by no means, for what God Commands us to do, he will assist us in the doing of it. And though Obedience be Supernatural, and weare Weak and Impotent, yet God is Omnipotent: Work therefore, for this Omnipotent God works in you, both to Will and to Do. And thus appears the force of the Reason, if you apply it to the Duty. Now if you thus refer it, then Observe,

That all Ability in, and all Encouragement to Obedience proceeds from God's working in us what he requireth from us. And thus as Christ said, my Father worketh hitherto, and I work: So may a Weak Christian say, what I do, is above my own Strength indeed; but my God and my Father worketh hitherto in me, and therefore it is that I am inabled thus to work.

2.

*Secondly*, If we refer this Reason to the manner of performing of Obedience, that it must be *with Fear and Trembling*, as if the Exhortation run thus, Be humble and awful in your Obedience, *For it is God who worketh in you*

you both to will and to do , and then it carries a double force with it.

First, That the due Consideration of Gods working in us , is the greatest inducement imaginable to a Self-Debasing Humiliation. There is nothing that will sooner take down Pharisaical Pride and Boasting , than sometimes to be Catechising our selves with those two or three Questions and Interrogatories of the Apostle ; *Who made thee to differ ?* 2 cor. 10. *What hast thou that thou didst not receive ?* 7. *Now if thou hast received it, Why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it ?* Why dost thou Boast and Glory, O vain Weak Man, when all thou hast and all thou dost is from God's free and arbitrary working in thee ! Alas, there is nothing of all thy Graces or Duties to be ascribed unto thy self, unless it be the Imperfections and Weaknesses of them. And this should cause us when we are most strongly carried out in the ways of God, and in the Duties of Holy Obedience, most of all to renounce our selves, and our own sufficiency ; and look upon it as an evident Argument that of our selves we are able to do nothing, because through God we are

are unable to do so much, yea, to do all things.

*Secondly, Since all we do is wrought in us by God, this should cause us to obey with a Holy Fear and Reverence, lest by our Miscarriages we should provoke God to withdraw from us, on whom depends all the Ability and Power we have to obey : It is God that worketh in you, and therefore work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

This now shall suffice for the opening and explaining of the Words. That which I shall press upon all, is the Duty of this Exhortation of the Apostle. And the Proposition I shall lay down from them, is this,

**Doctrine.** *That it is the Duty of every true Christian to work out his own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* Or thus, *Every Christian, nay every Man ought to work for his living, even for an Eternal Life.*

To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the *Bible*; we can no where open this *Blessed Book* but we find this Truth proved to us, either directly

rectly, or by consequence, for it is the very Genius of the *Scripture*. And yet it is strange in these Days to see how dubiously some Men (who would be thought admirers of Free Grace) speak of obedience and working, as if it were the brand of a legal Spirit, and as great a Stranger to a Christians Warrant, as it is to their practice. Oh it is a soft and easie *Doctrin* to bid Men sit still and believe (as if God would Translate Men to Heaven upon their Couches,) to tell them that all that they have now to do, is but to labour for more assurance, to Praise God, and to Sing Hallelujahs unto him. And so also it conduces much to their abundant Comfort; does it not? to tell them, that God sees no Sin in them, nor requires no Duty from them? That Repentance and Humiliation are legal things belonging only to younger Persons, and not to the Heirs of the Promises? Oh! Who could think it possible that such Dreams and Fantastick delusions could possess so many Mens Hearts that ever heard the *Scripture* speak in its own Language, or that ever read what *Christ* himself, the *Holy Ghost*, or the Blessed *Apostles* have written, who bid us to work the works

*works of God?* To give all Diligence, to abound in all the Fruits of Righteousness? Is it possible that these Notions should be dispersed by some, and entertained by others, but because it always hath been the policy of the *Devil*, wherein he hath sped so well, still to vent those Doctrines that indulge the Flesh, under the Name and Patronage of *Free Grace* and *Gospel attainments*? But of this more hereafter. Let us now consider the *Reasons* of this Truth. And,

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|---------------------------|--|
| I.                        | <i>First</i> , Wherfore is it that we are commanded, to strive that we may enter in at the strait Gate? So to run that we may Obtain? So to Wrestle that we may be able to Stand? So to Fight that we may lay hold on Eternal Life? Not to faint in our Minds? Nor to grow weary of well doing? Do not all these Expressions imply great labour and pains? Can you strive, and run, and wrastle and fight, and all this by doing nothing? or were it needful to be taught not to grow Faint, nor to be weary, when we have no work to do? Therefore it is the genius and sum of the <i>Scripture</i> to excite Men to be always active |
| Reason.                   |  |
| Luke 13.<br>24.           |  |
| Cor. 9.<br>22.            |  |
| Ephes. 6.<br>11. 12.      |  |
| Tim. 6.<br>12.            |  |
| Heb. 12. 3.<br>Gal. 6. 5. |  |

active and laborious in the ways of Holiness and Obedience.

*Secondly, Consider,* wherefore is it that Salvation is set forth to us under <sup>2.</sup> Reason. the notion of a Reward; is it not to imply that we must work for it? A Reward not indeed merited by our works; but yet a Reward measured out to us, and conferred upon us, according to our works; *God will render to every one Rom. 2. 6:* according to his works; to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory and Immortality, he will render Eternal Life. And indeed it were very strange, if that God, who will reward us with Eternal Life, according to our works, should yet lay a check upon the ingenuity of the new Creature, thereby to account Eternal Life too low a Motive to excite unto Eternal Life.

*Thirdly, Consider,* is it not to this end, that God hath implanted such an <sup>3.</sup> Reason. Active Principle of Grace in the Hearts of his Servants, that thereby they might be unable to work out their own Salvation? If God would save you without working, why then hath he given you

C such

such an operative Principle that you might work ? Nay, I might affirm it , he might as well save you without Grace, as without works; for that is not Grace that doth not put forth it self in working, Grace if it be true it will be working. it will rise in the Thoughts , it will work in the Affections , it will breath in Desires, appear in good works, and be very Active and Busy in the whole Life and Conversation. Now not to work, is that which puts a check and restraint upon this Active Principle; it is to curb it in, when it would freely break forth into Action upon every occasion given to it.

4.  
Reason.

*Fourthly* , Why hath God so often promised us Assistance, if it be not that thereby we should be encouraged to work ? He stands by us to confirm our Hearts , to strengthen our Hands, to help our Weakness , to quicken our Deadness, to recruit our Graces by continual Supplies ; and wherefore is all this but that we might work ? God rather than we shall not work, he himself will set us at work ; nay he will maintain us at our work , and in our work upon his own cost. He gives us Aid, and

and promises Assistance only for this end, that we might work out our own Salvation. *We are not sufficient of our selves, says the Apostle, as of our selves to think any thing:* What then, must we therefore sit still, because we are not sufficient? No, says he, for God who finds us Employment, will also find us Strength; *our sufficiency is of God:* And therefore it is that God gives in Assurances and Supplies, that we might work the Works of God.

<sup>2 Cor. 3.5.</sup>

And thus I have confirmed the *Doctrin*, why we ought to work, and that we ought to work.

But here, before I can proceed any further, there are some *Objections* that must be *answered*, that seem to oppose the Truth of this Doctrin.

First, *Some may cavil against this Com- Object. 1.*  
*mand of working out of our Salvation, as*  
*a thing impossible.*

Secondly, *As derogatory unto Christ Object. 2.*  
*and his Merits.*

Thirdly, *Others, as prejudicial to the Object. 3:*  
*free Grace of God, by which alone we are*  
*saved, and not by our own Works.*

**Object. 4.** Fourthly, Others look upon it as vain and needless, since God will certainly bring to salvation all those whom he hath Elected and foreknown according to his purpose; which purpose of his, neither their not working with it, nor nor their working against it, shall ever make void or frustrate.

**Object. 1.** I begin with the First: Say some, with what Justice and Equity can God require this Duty of working out of our salvation, when he knows we have no power to perform it? Either say they, it concerns those that are spiritually inclined and have their salvation already begun, that they perfect it by working of it out; and if so, alas to what purpose is it, when they themselves can act no further than they are acted? They cannot so much as Will their own salvation unless God give them to Will; much less then can they work out their salvation: Or else it concerns all that live under the sound of the Gospel, though Reprobates and cast-aways, though dead in Trespasses and Sins. And is it rational, is it just and equal to bid dead Men work? Or doth it become that God, who would be thought by us to be infinitely merciful and compassionate, to mock and deride humane Miseries, in requiring of

of them things that are impossible? Had he commanded us to bring Light out of Darkness: Had he bid us pull the Stars out of their Orbs, or with one of our Hands to stop the Sun in its course; All these Impossibilities we might as well do, as perform these divine Duties, without divine Assistance; we can as soon glorify our selves as sanctify our selves. Exhort and command never so long, with as great Authority and Vehemency as you please, yet till God move on us and work in us, you may as well expect Stocks and Stones should move at your speaking as we. And if God doth but once begin to move and work in us, we shall work and move without your Exhortations. It is therefore (say such as these) altogether in vain to press Men to Duty till God works in them; for all your Exhortations are not sufficient till he works; and when he works, all your Exhortations will be fruitless,

To this I Answer, and because it is the Answ. common Plea of Sinners why they do not work, and it is that which questionless doth too often rise in the Hearts and Thoughts of most Men, whereby they are greatly discouraged, and their Hands weakned in their Obedience: I shall, therefore the more largely

and particularly *Answer this Objection.*  
And,

Answ. 1. *First*, This serious and pressing Exhortation to Obedience and Working, doth not suppose in us, nor is it necessary that it should suppose in us a Power to obey, I mean it of a present and actual Power ; neither doth our want of Power take off our Obligation to obey. It may and will be granted, that there is no Command of God, but doth suppose a Power once bestowed. Whether or no his absolute uncontrollable Sovereignty might have required that from us that is above our Power ever to perform, may rather modestly be doubted, than peremptorily concluded : Yet this is certain, that those very Duties that now we complain we have no Strength and Power to perform, were once as subject to our Power and the Freedom of our own Wills, as now natural and moral Actions are : Subject (I say) to our Power, either to perform them, or not to perform them ; not as though we came now into the World with this Power, for we are all dead and still-born in respect of Grace ; but as having this Power in our *first Parent* who was our

our *Representative*, for in him we must be consider'd as existent even when he existed ; and what he received, it was for us, and what he did was done by us , and what he lost we lost in him. Now if we have lost this Power of Obeying, must God also lose his Privilege and Sovereignty of Commanding? Must he lessen his Authority, as we lessen our Ability? Truly had *Adam* once thought of this slight, he might have sinn'd himself quite from under the command and dominion of his Creator, and might soon have become thus free. Do not you your selves think you may, if a *Debtor* of yours through his own default becomes a *Bankrupt*, require your *Debt* of him? So stands the Case here between God and us ; we are all disabled to pay the *Debt* of Obedience that we owe to God , but yet it is through our own default;and the Power that we had, is not so much lost, as wilfully thrown away ; and may not God justly come upon us for our *Debt*? Our want of Power takes not off our obligation to Obedience, because it is through a wilful defect that we are deprived of that Power. If a Servant throw away his *Tools* with which he should work

C 4 may,

may not his Master justly expect his Work from him, though he knows he cannot work without them? God's Commands respect not the Impotency that we have contracted, nor do they therefore abate any thing of their Severity; but they respect that Power and Ability that was once conferred and bestowed upon us: Yea, were it so that God could with *Justice* require no more from us than what at present we have Power and Ability to perform, this would make the Grace of God, *First*, vain and fruitless; and, *Secondly*, dangerous and destructive.

I. *First, This would make void the pardoning Grace of God:* For according to this Doctrin, nothing could be required of us if we could do nothing; but without Grace we can do nothing, and therefore if Grace be not bestowed on us, nothing can justly be required from us, and if nothing be required nothing is due from us, and then we do not sin in not performing any thing; and where there is no sin, certainly there can be no place for pardoning Grace and Mercy. And so these wise Men, who think they do so much befriend the Grace

Grace and Mercy of God in all haste, in affirming that God requires nothing from us, but what at present we have Power to perform, are injurious to the Mercy of God in making of it void as to Pardon and Remission.

*Secondly,* this Doctrin makes the sanctifying Grace of God destructive and pernicious. If God can require justly no more of us than we can perform, wherefore is it that Men are justly damned? Is it not because they will not do what they are able to do? And whence is it that they have this Ability? Is it not from the Grace of God's Spirit? And therefore if they have not Grace to make them able to do more than their own corrupt Wills are willing to do, God could not justly condemn them, and consequently that of the Apostle should stand no longer true, *Through Grace ye Eph. 2. 5.  
are saved,* but through Grace ye perish. These two Consequences will follow, if God could justly require no more from us than what we have Power now to do. So that tho' we have not Power and Ability to work out our own Salvation, yet we are not thereby excused from our Obligation to do it. But, *Secondly,*

Answ. 2.

*Secondly, Though we cannot of our selves work out our own Salvation, Yet God doth not mock us, as some do thence infer, neither doth he only upbraid us with our own Weakness; but hath serious and weighty ends why he Commands us to Obey. Those that are so ready to cast this Odium upon the Doctrin of Special Grace, making God a derider of Human Frailty and Miseries, when he Commands Obedience from them, to whom (say they) himself denies that Power and Grace that should inable them to obey; I would only ask these Persons this Question, Whether do they grant, or whether or no can they deny, that God antecedently before he Commands, knows who will obey and who will not obey? If they say God knows who will not obey; will they say God mocks them when he Commands them to obey, though he knows they will not? What they Answer to this, the same may we Answer to their Objection.*

But now there are *two Ends* why God Commands us thus to work though we are not able, according to which God is very serious in commanding us thus to work.

And

And God doth this, *First*, That he may hereby convince us of our own Weakness, and that wretched Estate into which our Sins have brought us; that he might humble and abase us when we reflect how far we are fallen from our first Perfection and Excellency. When we consider on the one Hand that God requires nothing from us now, but what we once had a Power to perform; and then on the other Hand consider how little, yea how much of that nothing it is that now we have Power to perform; this convinces us how miserably great our Fall is, that makes those things impossible to us, that once were both easie and delightful.

1.

2.

*Secondly*, God loves to deal with Men as with rational Creatures, that have free Faculties, capable of moral Influences, fit Subjects to be wrought upon by Precepts, Counsels, Commands and Exhortations, as well as by Internal and Efficacious Grace; that Arguments and Motives may persuade without, as Grace sways within; that so by both he might render them a willing People in the Day of his Power. And there-

therefore they are not in vain, neither to those that shall be saved, nor to those that Perish.

I. *First*, To those that shall be saved, these are the Instruments which the Spirit of God makes use of to incline their Wills and conquer their Affections into the Obedience of Christ, and therefore they are not in vain. In conversion ordinarily, if not always, the *Moral* work goes before the *Physical*. That is, there is, first the rational Persuasion, before there is the efficacious and determining Motion: For God when he works on Man, he accommodates himself suitable to the Nature of Man; that as he is a Creature, so he may be and is the Subject of Gods efficacious Motions; and as he is Rational, so he may be guided by Counsels, lead by Persuasions, over-awed by Convictions; and therefore when God Converts any, he takes both these ways, inwardly he works by effectual Grace, powerfully subduing the Will as a Creature subject unto it; and outwardly he works by moral Suasions, and Authoritative Commands, whereby he inclines the will sweetly and freely to consent to the Power

Power of that inward Grace, which indeed he shall never, nay indeed he cannot resist ; and both these together do concur (as I said before) to make a willing People in the Day of Gods Power. And,

*Secondly*, For those that Perish, these Commands have a double end and use.

2.

1.

*First*, They are Instruments in the Hand of the common work of the Spirit of God, to raise them up to all those moral good things that they attain to, short of true and saving Grace. It is Wonderful truly to see how the raging Wickedness of the World is dared by a Command charged with a Threatning. *Herod* heard *John Baptist*, who doubtless laid the Law home to him, so that he did many things. *Abime-lech* and *Laban* were warned in a Dream, whereby God over-ruled and prevented that Wickednes that was intended by them. Were they compelled to what they did? No, God loves to rule the World in a rational way ; so that though he acts and moves wicked Men to that good that they do, yet he doth it

it by moral Considerations, and such Inducements as do most comport and suit with the Liberty of their own Will: Promises incourage, Threatnings deter, Counsels direct, Commands inforce, and all these concur instrumentally to awe the Consciences, and to incline the Wills even of wicked Men themselves. Whose Conscience can gainsay this? Let the vilest Sinner freely speak, when he hath been most mad and wild upon his Lusts, hath not oftentimes some Command or Threatning suddenly shot it self in betwixt his Conscience and Sin? Hath not two or three weak Words silently whispered to him, whence or from whom he knows not, stopt his way and given a Check to his Lust, when it was swelling ready to break forth into Act? And whence have they this Power? It is not from themselves; for why then doth it not always so work? But it is from God's Inward and *Physical*, tho' but common *Work*, that when the Affections are most furious, and Corruption most raging, will effectually persuade to restrain and asswage.

*Secondly,*

Secondly, Another End is, hereby God leaves them without Excuse: If they perish they shall have nothing to pretend against God. Hath he not often warned, and counselled and threatned them? Hath he not told them, with as much earnestnes and vehemency as the words of his Ministers could deliver it, *That the wages of sin is death*, and the end of those ways wherein they walk will be Shame and eternal Destruction? Have they not with all Seriousness and Entreaties been called upon again and again to *repent and turn* from the unfruitful Works of Darkness, and to work the Works of God? Can the Mouth of God or Man speak plainer, when they have been calling and crying after any, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?* This is that which from our Souls we do beseech and intreat at the Hands of Sinners, even for the Blood and Bowels of Jesus Christ; nay, for the Blood and Bowels of their own precious Souls, which they are wilfully spilling upon the Ground, that they would *turn and live*. Now there is not one that hears this serious Obtestation and is not obedient to it, but his Blood, even the Blood

Blood of his Soul, will lie upon him for ever. What is it that Men expect? Must God drive Men to Heaven by force and violence, whether they will or no? He hath laid Promises and Threatnings before them, he Exhorts and Commands: And if these things will not prevail with Men whose Faculties are intire, whose Reason is sound, and whose Wills are free; Think not foolishly to charge God, for he is free from the Blood of all Men, and Sinners will be found to be Self-murderers and Self-destroyers. *If I had not come and spoken unto them,* says our Saviour, *they had then had no sin,* but now they have no cloak for their sin. So if God had not come and spoken unto Sinners, they had neither had Sin nor Condemnation; but now that he hath spoken to them so often, and exhorted them so frequently and earnestly, therefore, *now they have no cloak for their sin.* God hath spoken, and his speaking will strike every impenitent Wretch dumb and silent at the great Day, whatever they pretend to now. And this is a *second Particular in Answer to this Objection,* God doth not mock Mens Weakness when he commands them to work, but hath great, wise and weighty Ends why he doth it. *Thirdly,*

Thirdly, To come somewhat nearer: Answ. 3.

There is indeed no such Impotency and Weakness in Man, but if he will he may work out his own Salvation. I speak not this to assert the power of Man to work out Salvation without the Aid of special Grace, to encline the Will; but if the Will be once inclined and made willing, there is nothing more required to make a Man able; I say, where there is special Grace given to make the Will willing to convert, to believe and to repent, there is nothing more required to make a Man able; because Conversion, Faith and Repentance chiefly consist in the Act of the Will it self; now if the Will wills Repentance, it doth repent; if it wills Faith, it doth believe; and so of the rest: And therefore there is nothing more required to make a Man able than what he hath in a state of un-regeneracy; only to make him willing is required special Grace, which they that favour the undue liberty of the Will do deny. And therefore, God expostulates with the stubborness of the Will, *Why will you perish, why will you die?* And Christ accuseth the Will, *You will not come unto me that you may have Life.* John 5. 40

*Life.* It is true there is an impotency in the Will, but this is only its stubbornness and obstinacy ; it will not hearken to God's Call, it will not obey his Commands, it will not strive against Sin nor perform Duties, and therefore it cannot. Our Cannot is not indeed an impotency that we lie under so much, as stubbornness of our *Wills*. There is not the greatest Sinner, who hath wrought Iniquity with both Hands greedily, but may work out his own Salvation if he will ; *if he be but once willing*, he hath that already that may make him able; God puts no new Powers into the Soul when he converts it. It is true, the Will cannot incline it self to Obedience without Grace, but yet it can intend it if it will ; it is its stubbornness that makes it impotent. It is in the things of Grace, as in other free Actions of a Man's Life with a proportionable abatement : A Man can Speak and Walk if he will, but if he be resolutely set not to do these things, he cannot do them so long as that Resolution remains, though simply and absolutely he can do them ; doth this argue any impotency ? So is it here, you may obey and work if you will ; but if you are resolutely bent against these,

these, if you are resolved not to do them, while that Resolution continues you cannot do them ; but this argues not any natural impotency, but a moral impotency only ; this is an impotency of Stubborness and Perverseness. Never therefore plead the inability of your Will, no it is through your own stubborn Resolution if you perish ; you are resolved for Hell and Destruction, and if you are plunged into them , it is through your own Wilfulness, and not through Weakness.

*Fourthly, To come yet a little nearer* Answ. 4.  
to Conscience and Practice : These very Men that thus make their impotency a pretence for their Sloth, they do not indeed believe what they pretend and assert here ; they do not believe that they are thus impotent, no it is in the inward and secret Thoughts of them all that they have a Power to work out their own Salvation ; and therefore whether they have or have not Power, yet still they are inexcusable, if while they think they have Power, yet they will not strive and endeavour to put it forth. Those Men who thus plead impotency and want of power to Obey

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and work out their Salvation, though they speak these things, yet they believe not a word of what they say, and therefore they are inexcusable, if they strive not to put forth that Power that they suppose they have into Act. Although a Man's Feet be chain'd and fetter'd that he cannot walk nor stir, yet if he thinks himself at Liberty, and yet will sit still, judge you whether the Fault be not wholly to be imputed to his want of Will, and not to his want of Power; for he thinks himself free and able to move, but will not try. So is it here; wicked Men do think they have Power to Work, however they speak otherwise sometimes, and therefore they are utterly inexcusable if they do not Work; this is as clear as the Light, and their Slothfulness therefore proceeds not from their Weakness, but from their Wilfulness. And I shall endeavour by some Arguments to convince Sinners, that they do indeed think and believe that they have this Power to work out their own Salvation, whatever they may pretend to, and therefore they are inexcusable if they do not strive and endeavour for to do it. And,

*Fir<sup>t</sup>,*

First, Did you never, when God hath shaken his Rod over you, promise and resolve to work? By his Rod, I mean either some Convictions or Afflictions; have not these made you to enter into Ingagements with God that you would obey him, and walk more holily and strictly for the future? And did you not really thus resolve to do? Few, I believe, there are but have some time or other, under some Fit of Sickness or some pang of Conscience, thus done. And what, did you resolve all this, and yet at the same time think and believe you could do nothing at all? Did you only mock God? Did you only dally and play with your own Consciences? No, certainly, Conscience was too much provoked, too much enraged, and too broad awakened to be so jested withal. We find this very Temper in the *Israelites*, when they were affrighted with the terrible Voice of God from *Mount Sinai* in the 5th of *Deutronomy*. See how confidently, under that Conviction, they promised and resolved, *Speak thou unto us what the Lord our God shall say unto thee, and we will do it.* Deut. 5, 27 And so the *Jews* also, when

D 3                   they

they were in great Distress and Calamity, when the Whip and the Rod was over them then they take up large Resolutions, and make great Promises

*Jer. 42. 2.* what they will be and do, *Whether it be good or whether it be evil*, say they, *we will obey the voice of the Lord our God*. And oh ! how many pious Purposes and holy Resolutions have the Dangers, Fears and sick Beds of many Men been Witnesses unto ? Have they not heard Sinners cry out, *Lord, spare a little, give us some space, try us once more Lord, and we will reform our sinful Lives, and perform neglected Duties ; never more will we return to Folly*. And are not these Resolutions and Promises evident Convictions, that you thought you had Power to do what you thus resolved to do ? Who is there but hath some time or other, under some Trouble and Affliction, taken up such Resolutions of Obedience as these ? And certainly you dare not so much mock God, and dally with your own Consciences under such Convictions, as to make such Promises, but that you think you can perform what you promise. And that is one Argument.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Did you never in your whole lives perform a Duty to God? Did you never pray to him? Are there any so desperately Prophane, so utterly lost as to any shews and appearances of Goodnes, as not to have prayed or performed one Duty unto God in his whole Life? Why now to what end have you prayed and performed these Duties that you have done? Was it not for Salvation? And did you work for Salvation and at the same time believe you could not work? No, this is impossible that ever any Mans Practice should maintain such a contradiction. What ever Mens Opinions are, yet their works shew that they think they have Power; for somthing must be done, though it be but formally, though but a slight, cold, heartles, *Lord have Mercy on me*, or a customary, *Lord forgive me*; yet something Conscience requires, and this Men reckon and account the working out Salvation.

2.

*Thirdly*, Wherefore is it that you trust to and rely upon your works, if indeed you think you have no Power to work out your own Salvation by

3.

D. 4 them?

them ? Would it be so hard and difficult to take Men off from leaning too much upon their Works, if they did not believe they had a Power to work out their own Salvation by them ? Men do apprehend some worth, some value and sufficiency in what themselves do in order to Eternity. For, bid them forgo and renounce their own Works, their own Righteousness ; this is a hard saying, and they can as easily renounce and forgo all Hopes of Happiness and Salvation , as renounce their own Works. Now whence is it that Men are so difficultly brought unto the renouncing their own Works ? Why it is because by them they Hope to obtain Salvation. And can there be such a Principle in Men, and yet at the same time believe and think that they cannot work out their own Salvation ? It is very evident therefore, whatever Notions Men may take up to stop the Mouth of a clamorous Conscience when it calls them to working and labouring, yet they do not themselves believe what they say concerning their impotency, but do really think they have a Power to work out their own Salvation.

*Fourthly,*

4.

*Fourthly, Did you never when the Spirit of God hath been dealing with your Hearts and Consciences, when it hath been persuading you to enter upon a Course of Obedience, did you never procrastinate and use Delays? Did you never stifle the Breathings, and resist the Motions of the Holy Spirit, thinking it time enough to do what it puts you upon hereafter? What need I begin so soon to vex Flesh and Blood? What, deny the Pleasures of my Life as soon as I come to relish and taste them? When Sickness and gray Hairs admonish me, and tell me I am near Eternity; when old Age promiseth me, that the severity and strictness of Religion shall not last long to trouble me, then will I repent and believe, and work out my own Salvation. Speak truly and deal plainly with your own Consciences, have not these been the foolish Reasonings of your own Hearts? Have you not often thus promised God and your own Consciences? And doth not all this imply that you thought you had a Power to do it? Why did you delay and put it off, if you thought you had no Power to do it at last? Wherefore thou art *inexcusable*, O Man, whoever thou*

thou art that wilt not work ; it is in vain to plead thou wantedst Power, God will confute thee by thy self and out of thy own Mouth. What wilt thou say, thou hadst no Power ? Why thou thoughtest that thou hadst Power, and yet wouldest not work, nor endeavour so to do ; and therefore thy Ruin, if thou perishest, is as wilful, and thy Condemnation will be as Just, as if thou hadst Power and wouldest not work. And this is the *Fourth Answer* to this *Objection*, Men do really believe that they have Power to work, and therefore they are inexcusable if they will not endeavour to put it forth.

5. *Fifthly*, Men will not plead so Foolishly, no not in matters of far lower concernment than the Salvation of their Souls is. Would a Master, when he Commands his Servant to work, take this as a sufficient Excuse for his Sloth and Idleness, that he hath no Power to work, till God Acts and Moves him ? Why this is a Truth, that he cannot do it unless God enable him ; and it may as well be Objected by your Servants to you, and with more Reason too, than by you unto God. Pray tell me, what

what Power have I to Speak one Word, or you to Hear one Word more unless God concurs to it? Nay, we are not sufficient to think as of our selves ; yet we do not make this an Excuse to forbear those Actions that are necessary. Do we therefore resolve to do nothing because it is impossible for us to do any thing unless God concur? What Stupid and dull Folly is this? No, but we put it plainly and hourly to the Trial ; and never could any one produce that Man that could ever say, God was wanting to him in his concurrence, when he would have done an Action. What a miserable ridiculous Task would it be, if in every Action of our Lives wherein we can do nothing without God, we should still be questioning Gods concurrence with us ! When you Sit, do you dispute whether God will enable you to Arise? When you Walk, do you every Step you take, question whether God will concur to another Step? No Men put these things to the Trial ; and though it be impossible that they should live, move or stir, till God act and move them, yet this hinders not Mens endeavours, no nor is it any matter of discouragement to them. Now why should

Should we not do so in Spirituals as well as in Temporals? Are they not of greater Concernment? Do they not more deserve the Trial? It is true, we can do nothing without God's concurrence; yet let us put it to the trial whether or no God will not concur when we endeavour. Certainly that Man must be for ever nameless that can say, he was truly willing and did sincerely endeavour to do any good Thing, and God did not inable him.

6. *Sixthly, Consider this, altho' wicked Men had Power to work out their Salvation, yet they would never do it ; and therefore it is a vain and most unreasonable pretence for Sloth, to plead want of Power ; for had wicked Men Power they would never Obey. But how can any one tell that? What, not obey if we had Power? Why no ; and the Reason is this, because there is no wicked Man in the World that hath done so much, or that doth so much as he is able to do, no not so much as he is able to do without special Grace and Affistance ; and therefore, it is not Inability but wilful Sloth that destroys Men. Sinners, ask your own Consciences*

ences this Question, Was there not one Duty more that you could have performed? Was there not one Temptation, nor one Corruption more that you could have resisted? Could you not have prayed, and read, and heard, and meditated more upon Heavenly Things, even then when your Hearts and Thoughts have been vain and worldly, yea, sinful and devilish? Might not that time have been spent in holy Converse, that you have trifled away in Idleness and in doing nothing, or that which is worse than nothing? What Force or Restraint is laid upon you? Is there any Violence used to you? Can you not think? And if you can, can you not think of God as well as of the Things of the World, or think upon your Lusts? Can you not Speak? And if you can, can you not speak of God, of Heaven, and the Concernments of another Life, as well as of your Trade, and Bargainings, and other trivial Matters, which are below a Man, much more below a Christian? What force is there put upon Sinners? Doth the *Devil* screw open the *Drunkards* Mouth, and pour down his intemperate Cups whether he will or no? Doth the *Devil* violently move  
the

the black Tongue of the *Blasphemer* and *Swearer* to rend and tear the holy Name of God, by horrid Oaths and Blasphemies? Doth the *Devil* strike Men dumb when they should Pray, or Deaf when they should Hear, or Senseless when they should understand and ponder? Is there any such force or violence used unto any? Can you not avoid the one? And can you not do the other if you will? Yes you can, but you will not; and therefore neither would you work out your own Salvation if you could do it. Is there any hopes that you would ever willingly do the greater, who will not do the less? Let your Impotency and Weakness be what it will, your *Damnation* lies not upon it, but upon your Wilfulness, so long as your Wilfulness is greater than your Weakness: No, it is not upon your Impotency that your precious and immortal Souls perish eternally, but it is only for lack of a Will to pity them, and to save them. *Sinners!* wherefore then will you perish? Why will you sleep away your Souls into Hell? Will you go on drowsily to Destruction? Shall your Souls be ready to burn as a Brand in unquenchable Fire, and will you not stretch forth your

your Hand to snatch it out? Is it more painful for you to Work, than to be Damned? Endeavour therefore to do what you can; labour and sweat at Salvation rather than fail of it: Let it not grate and fret your Consciences in Hell, that you lie there for a wilful Neglect.

*But should I labour, should I endeavour, should I work to my utmost, should I do all that I am able to do, I cannot work Grace in my self by all this, to what purpose then should I work?*

However, try God in this particular: Answ.  
Did you ever know any who thus laboured, and thus wrought, that did not give very good Evidence of a Work of Grace wrought upon their Hearts? And why then should you suspect that you should be the first? What reason have you to think that God should make you the first Example of a Soul that did endeavour, strive and work for Salvation, and yet came short of it; when you never heard or read of any that put forth themselves to the utmost for the obtaining of Grace, and yet fell short of Grace or Glory?

Thus

Thus in these six Particulars put together, you have a full and an abundant Answer and Satisfaction to this *Objection*, concerning our Impotency to work out our own Salvation.

**Object. 2.** *Secondly*, Another Objection against this Doctrin is this, *Thus to press Men to Obedience and Working, is prejudicial and derogatory unto Christ's Merits*, by which alone we are saved, and not by our own Works. *Hath not Christ already done all for us?* *Hath not he finished and wrought out our Salvation himself?* *And is not this to render his Work as insufficient, to go and piece it out by our Obedience?* *Is not this to set up our Works as Antichrist, in flat opposition and defiance to the gracious Undertaking and perfect Accomplishment of Jesus Christ, when all that we have now to do is to believe in him, and to get a Right and Title to him, and saving Interest in him?*

**Answ.**

To this I *Answer*, the Merit of Jesus Christ and our Working are not inconsistent, but there is a sweet Harmony and Agreement, betwixt them in carrying on the Work of our Salvation.

And

And to make this evident, I shall lay down the due Bounds and Limits of each of them, that so it may appear what Christ hath done for us, and what he expects we should do for our selves. Christ therefore hath done Two Things in order to the carrying on of our Salvation.

First, He hath purchased and procured eternal Happiness to be conferred upon us hereafter.

Secondly, he hath merited Grace to be conferred upon us here to prepare us for that Happiness.

First, He hath purchased Happiness and eternal Life, for all that do believe in him. *I give unto them eternal Life,* says he himself, *to John.* And says the John 10.  
Apostle, He is the Author of eternal Sal-  
vation to them that Obey him. Now as there are two things that must be done for us before we could be brought unto a state of Salvation, namely a freeing us from our liableness unto Death, and a bestowing upon us a right unto Life eternal; so Jesus Christ, that he might bring us into this State hath performed both these things for us.

*First, He hath satisfied Divine Justice for us, snatching us from under the vengeance of God, substituting himself in our room and stead, bearing the Load of all that Wrath and Punishment that must otherwise have fallen insupportably heavy upon us.* *His Soul, says the Prophet, was made an Offering for Sin.* *And He was made Sin for us, says the Apostle, that is, he was punished as a Sinner for us, Who knew no Sin.* And,

*Secondly, He hath perfectly fulfilled the Commands of the Law by his active Obedience, that the Life promised by God in the Law to the doers of it, doth now undoubtedly belong to all those for whom Christ did obey the Law; that is, for all those that believe in him. And by both these, bearing the penalty of the Law, and fulfilling the Duties of the Law, God is attoned, Justice is satisfied, Vengeance is pacified, and we are reconciled, Adopted, and made Heirs of Glory according to the Promise.*

*But what? shall Glory and Happiness be presently bestowed upon us? shall we be installed*

installed into it without any more Circumstance? must nothing intervene betwixt Christ's purchase and our actual possession? Yes, that there must. For,

Secondly, Christ hath purchased Grace to be bestowed upon them upon whom he bestows Salvation. *When he Ascended up on high he led Captivity captive, and gave Gifts unto Men,* and among others, especially the Gifts of Grace. *For of his fulness,* says the Apostle, *have we all received, and Grace for Grace.* And why did Christ make this purchase? Why did he merit Grace for us? Was it not that we might act it in Obedience? And if Christ merited Grace that we might Obey, is it sense to Object that our Obedience is derogatory to Christ's Merit? If one end of Christ's doing all that he did for us, was to inable us to do for our selves, will any Man say, now I am bound to do nothing, because Christ hath done all? How lost are such Men both to Reason and Religion, who undertake so to argue? No, Salvation was purchased and Grace was procured, that by the acting and exercise of that Grace we might attain to that Salvation; and

both these are to be preserved entirely as things most Sacred, ascribing them solely to the Merits of our Saviour. So far are we from Exhorting Men to work out their Salvation by way of Merit and Purchase, as that we conclude them guilty of the highest *Sacrileg*, and practical *Blasphemy* against the *Priestly Office* of Jesus Christ, who think by their own works to Merit the one or the other. And therefore though Jesus Christ hath done thus much for us, yet that he might leave us also some work to do, I shall now shew what he expects from us in order to the working out of our own Salvation. And as he hath done two things for us, so he requires two things from us. As.

1. *First*, He requires we should put forth all the Strength and Power of Nature in labouring after Grace. And,
2. *Secondly*, He requires that we should put forth the power of Grace in labouring for Salvation, purchased for us.
1. *First*, He requires that all those who are void of Grace should labour for it with

with that Power and Strength that they have, and in so doing they do not at all intrench upon the Work of Christ, neither is it at all derogatory to his Merits. See how the Prophet expresseth this, it.

Ezekiel 18. Make you a new heart and a new spirit. He speaks to those that were

Ez. 18. 31.

in a state of Nature, and he bids them make them a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die? Noting, that if they did not labour after a new Heart and a new Spirit, they would certainly die the Death. Let every Sinner know that this is it that he is called upon for, this is that God expects from him, it is his Work to repent and return that he may live. It is his Work to labour to change his own Heart, and to renew his own Spirit: It is true, it is God's Work also, for he hath promised to give a new

Ez. 11.

Heart and a new Spirit, and it is Christ's

19.

Work also as he is God, but yet it is not Christ's Work as a Mediator. And therefore to endeavour the working of a new Heart in us, is not at all to intrench upon the Mediatorial Office of Jesus Christ, for so his Office is not to work Grace, but to procure it; not to implant Grace, but to purchase it. You cannot therefore sit down and say, what

need is there of my working ? Christ hath already done all my Work for me to my Hands. No, Christ hath done his own Work, he hath done the Work of a *Saviour* and a *Surety*, but he never did the Work of a Sinner. If Christ by meriting Grace had bestowed it upon thee and wrought it in thee, then indeed there was no more required of thee to become Holy, but to cast back a lazy Look to the purchase of Jesus Christ ; then thy Sloth would have had some pretence why thou dost not labour. But this will not do, our Saviour commands all Men *To seek first the*

*Mat. 6. 33. kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof.*

*Act. 8. 22.* And the Apostle exhorts *Simon Magus* himself, though *in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity*, yet pray, says he, *if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* Do not therefore cheat your own Souls into Perdition by lazy Notions of Christ's Merits. What though Christ hath merited, yet God requires that you should work and labour to change your own Hearts, and reform your own Lives ; but if you sit still expecting till the meriting Grace of Christ drop down into your Souls, and of its own accord, and change

change your Hearts ; truly it may be before that time you your selves may drop down into Hell with your old unchanged Hearts. And this is the first thing Christ requires.

*Secondly*, Christ expects and requires that those that have Grace should put forth the utrnost Strength and Power thereof, in labouring after that Salva-  
tion that he hath purchased for them : 2.  
Those  
that have  
Grace  
must La-  
bour for  
Salvation.  
He hath merited Salvation for them, but it is to be obtained by them through their own Labour and Industry. Is not that which Christ hath already done, sufficient for them ? Is it not enough that he hath reconciled them to God by the Blood of the Covenant, that he hath made their Peace and procured their Pardon for them ; But must Christ Repent, and Believe, and Obey for them ? This is not to make him a *Saviour*, but a *Drudg*. He hath done what was meet and fit for a *Mediatour* to do ; He now requires of us what is meet for *Sinners* to do ; namely, to Believe, to Repent, to be Converted and to Obey : He now bids you Wash and be Clean, and what would you have more ? Would you have the great *Pro-*

phet come and strike off your *Leprosy*, and you only mark the Cure, and do nothing thereunto? Or is it indeed enough that Salvation and Happiness is purchased, that the way to Heaven is made passable, that the Bolts and Bars of the *new Jerusalem* by Christ are broken off? Alas, what of all this! thou mayest still be as far from Heaven and Glory as ever, if thou dost not walk in the way that leads to it: Still thou art as far from entring into Heaven as ever, if, thou dost not strive at the entrance into the strait Gate. It is therefore in vain that Christ died, it is in vain that thou art Justified, it is in vain that thou art Adopted, it is in vain that Heaven is prepared for thee: Christ may keep Heaven and Glory, and his Crowns and Robes for ever to himself, unless as he hath purchased these great things for his People, so also he hath purchased to himself a peculiar People Zealous of good Works: A People who by patient continuance in well doing seek for Glory and Immortality, and by that way obtain it. Thus we see Christs doing all for us is no excuse for our doing nothing: He hath indeed done all for us that belongs to him as a *Mediatour* meriting

riting and procuring Grace and Salvation; but he never intended to do all for us, as to the conveying of them to us, and making of them ours. No, that is still to be done by us. And therefore tho Christ's Works alone were meritorious, yet by the actings of Faith we must apply his Merit, and by the acting of Obedience confirm them to our selves.

I might add also, when Christ is said to obey the Law in our stead, as well as to suffer in our stead: Though his bearing the punishment of the Law by Death doth excuse and exempt us from suffering; yet his obeying of the Law doth not excuse our Obedience unto the Law. Christ obeyed the Law in a far different respect to the Obedience which is now required from us; He obeyed as a Covenant of works, we only as a Rule of Righteousness: If he had failed in the least tittle he could not have purchased Life that was promised; but we, though we fall infinitely short in our Obedience may yet inherit that Life that Christ hath purchased. Christ's Obedience was fully perfect, yet ours is not derogatory thereunto, because it proceeds from other grounds than Christ's did. But I will not proceed further

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in this, only conclude this *Answer* with two practical things in reference to this *Question*.

*First*, So work with that Earnestness, Constancy and Unweariedness in well doing, as if thy Works alone were able to justifie and save thee. Look with what Affection and Fervency you would pray, if now God with a Voice from Heaven should tell you, that for the next Prayer you make, you should be either Saved or Damned. Look with what Reverence and Attention you would Hear, with what Spiritualnes of Heart you would Meditate, if your eternal State and Condition were to be determined and fixed by the next of those Duties that in this kind you were to perform ; with the same Fervency, Affection and Spiritualness perform all the Obedience that you do. Why should you not do so ? Are not Gods Commands as peremptory and as Authoritative for Obedience under the Covenant of Grace, as they were under the Covenant of Works ? Is not Obedience of as absolute necessity now as ever, though not to the same end and purpose ? And since the end of our

our Obedience is graciously changed, doth not this chang lay a farther obligation of Gratitude upon us to obey God, who requires it from us, not as Merit, but as Duty? Still there is as great an obligation to obey now under the condition of the Covenant of Grace, as ever there was while Mankind stood under the tenour of the Covenant of Works. Certainly Christ's Merit was never given to slacken our Obedience, and it is the most unworthy, nay, let me say it is the most accursed use that any Christian can make of them, that from the Merit of Christ he shall take encouragement to grow more remiss and slack in Obedience. Would you not therefore turn the Grace of God into Wantonness? Would you not abuse the infinite Mercy of a Mediator? Think with your selves, how would I strive and struggle were I to stand or fall upon the account of my own Works and Duties; use the same Diligence, put forth the same Endeavours as indeed in that Case you would do. And,

*Secondly*, So absolutely depend and rely upon the alone Merits of Jesus Christ for your Justification and Salvation,

tion, as if you never had performed an Act of Obedience in all your Life. This is the right Gospel-frame of Obedience, so to work as if you were only to be saved by your own Merits, and withal so to rest on the Merits of Christ as if you had never wrought any thing. It is a difficult thing to give to each of these its Due in our Practice. When we Work we are too apt to neglect Christ; and when we rely on Christ we are too apt to neglect Working: But that Christian hath got the right skill and art of Obedience that can mingle these two together, that can with one Hand work the Works of God, and yet at the same time with the other Hand lay fast hold on the Merits of Jesus Christ. Let this *Antinomian* Principle be for ever rooted out of the Minds of Men, that our working is derogatory to Christs Work. Never more think Christ hath done all your Work for you, for that is unbecoming the free Spirit of the Gospel; but labour for that Salvation that he hath purchased and merited. Could ever such senseless *Objections* prevail with those Men who ever seriously read that Scripture in Tit. 2.14. *Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all Iniquity,*

quity, and purify to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works? Were this place seriously ponder'd over by Men, they would be ashamed to Object any longer, that our Duties and Works are derogatory to the purchase of Christ, for *he gave himself for this end that he might purchase such a People that might be zealous of good Works.* But truly when Sloth and Ignorance meet together, if you tell Men what Powers their Natures have to work, and how necessary Obedience is to Salvation, that thereby we might excite and quicken their Hearts to Obedience, they with the *Sluggard* fold their Arms in their Bosom doing nothing, telling us these Doctrins are *Arminianism* and flat *Popery*; whereas in Deed and in Truth they are as far distant from either of them as Light is from Darkness; it is their Ignorance and Sloth only that makes them think so. But deceive not your selves, this *Doctrin* is such that whether it take hold on your Judgments and Understandings now, I know not; but this I know assuredly, it shall take hold of your Consciences, either here or hereafter, and then it will not suffice you to make this Excuse, either that you had no Power

to

to do any thing, or that Christ hath already done all Things for you. And so much for the Second Objection.

**Object. 3<sup>r</sup>** Thirdly, Others may Object, That this Duty of working out of our Salvation, is inconsistent with, and prejudicial to, the freeness of Gods Grace, by which alone we are saved: If God save them only that work for Salvation, how then doth he save them freely, and that by Grace we are saved?

**Answ. 1.** First, In general I answer, That Salvation upon our Working and Obedience is free Salvation, and that for four Reasons.

I.  
Working  
for  
Salvation  
is our Du-  
ty, and so  
not meri-  
torious.

First, Because all our working is a natural Duty that we owe to God, as Creatures to their Creator. Had God required the same Things of us that now he doth, and never propounded a Reward to encourage us, he had been just and we had been as absolutely and as indispensably obliged to obey as now we are. We have not so great a Right to Salvation, as God hath to our Obedience. God can challenge our Service and Obedience from us, because of our natural Bond and Obligation, as well as from that

that voluntary Covenant where into we have entred with God to be Obedient; but we can only plead for Salvation, because God hath made a Promise that he will fave those that Obey. Whether God had made that Promise or not, yet he might have required the same Obedience from us that now he doth, because we owe it to him naturally by our Creation. And is it not now free Grace and Mercy, that when God might have required Obedience without a Reward, that yet he will bestow Salvation according to that Obedience? See what our Saviour saith in *Luke 17.* *Doth the Master thank the Servant because he did the things that he was commanded to do?* *I trow not.* *So even ye likewise, when you have done all those things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable Servants;* for when we have done all, we have but done that which was our Duty to do. Yea, and our Duty it was to do it, though God had never made a Promise to reward what we have done. We are unprofitable Servants and deserve not so much as Thanks. *Doth the Master thank the Servant because he did the things that were commanded?* *I trow not.* And if we do not merit Thanks when we have done our

our utmost, how then can we merit Salvation?

2.  
Our Obedience is imperfect in this Life.

*Secondly, Our Obedience is imperfect in this Life, it is full of cracks and flaws: And if to accept and reward the most perfect Obedience with Salvation, be an Act of Mercy and free Grace, as it is, because it is our Duty if there were no Salvation promised; how much more is free Grace magnified and glorified in accepting and rewarding a weak and imperfect Obedience with that Salvation, which the most perfect Obedience cannot deserve? For when we have done all, we have done but that which was our Duty to do; and if we could say so, doth the Master thank the Servant? No: But alas, in many things we offend all. Now to reward that with eternal Salvation, that deserves eternal Damnation; to reward that Work with Life, that deserves to be rewarded with Death, what is this but the effect of rich and glorious Grace? What is this but to bestow Heaven, not according to Merit, but rather according to our Demerit?*

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly,* Because there is no comparison betwixt Salvation and our Obediences, and therefore free Grace shines forth still. It is free Grace though we do obey: We obey as Creatures, God rewards as a God; our Obedience is Temporal, but our Reward is Eternal; our Obedience is mixed with Rebellion, but the Reward hath no mixture to take off the fulness and sweetness of it. Therefore it is free Grace still to give an infinite Reward to so mean an Obedience, betwixt which Obedience and Reward, there is no comparison or proportion.

There is  
no compa-  
rison be-  
tween Sal-  
vation and  
our Obe-  
dience.

*Fourthly,* Though we are commanded to obey, yet that Grace whereby we do obey, is the Gift of God. It is he that works in us this Obedience which he rewards with Salvation: And must not this then be wholly of free Grace? To save upon an Obedience wrought in us by God himself, it is to save altogether as freely as if we were saved without any Obedience at all. And so much in *Answer unto the Third Objection.*

Grace  
whereby  
we obey,  
is the Gift  
of God.

Fourthly, Others may say, That it is a vain and most needless thing to press this Doctrin of working for Salvation upon them. What! they work? If they are Elected to Salvation they shall be saved whether they work or not; and if they are not Elected, all their working will be to no purpose, for they shall never be saved by it.

To this I Answer, We are to look to God's Commands, not to his Decrees; to our Duty not to his Purposes. The Decrees of God are a vast Ocean, whereinto many possibly may have curiously pry'd to their own Horror and Despair; but few or none have ever pry'd into them to their own Satisfaction. This Election in particular is not written in the Word of God; but this Duty is plainly written: If thou performest thy Duty, thereby thou shalt come to know thy Election. It is but a preposterous Course and that which will both discourage all Endeavours and fill the Soul with Despair, to look first to God's Decrees, and then to its own Duty; whereas indeed the right Method is, first, to perform thy own Duty, and thereby to be led into the knowledge of God's Decrees.

Question

Question not therefore whether thou art Elected or not, but first work for Salvation, and if thy Work be good, and thy Obedience true, thereby thou mayest come to a certain Knowledge that thou art *Elected*. And know this also farther, that God who Elects to the End, Elects also to the Means. Now Obedience is the means and way to Salvation, and therefore if thou art *Elected* to Salvation, thou art also *Elected to Obedience*. Say not therefore, if I am Elected, I shall be saved whether I work or not; there is no such thing: I may boldly say, if thou art Elected and doest not work, it is impossible that thy *Election* should save thee. What says the Apostle, 2 Thess. God hath chosen us to <sup>2 Thess. 2. 13.</sup> Salvation, there's Election; chosen us to <sup>13.</sup> Salvation, there's the End. But how? through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth: Chosen us to Salvation as to the End, but it is not an End to be obtained without Sanctification. There is indeed an absolute *Election* to Salvation whereby God, without respect of Works, hath chosen some to Salvation; but there is no *Election* to Salvation absolute whereby God hath chosen any to Salvation without Works, that is, whe-

ther they work or not. If therefore you believe heartily and obey sincerely, then your *Election* to Salvation stands firm; nay, the *Scripture* makes *Election* to be terminated as well in *Obedience* as *Salvation*. *Elect*, says the *Apostle*, unto *Obedience through Sanctification of the Spirit*. In the former place it was, *Elect to Salvation through Sanctification*; but in this it is, *Elect to Obedience through Sanctification*: Noting thus much to us, That none are *Elected to Salvation* but those that are *Elected to Obedience*; and therefore it is unreasonable, yea, it is contradictory to say, If I am *Elected* I shall be saved whether I obey or not, for none are thereunto *Elected but thro' Obedience*.

And now having, as I hope, satisfactorily Answer'd all *Objections* and *Scruples* that may arise in the Hearts of Men against this *Doctrine*, I now proceed to press this Duty of working for *Salvation* upon their Consciences; and I shall do it in a Use of Exhortation.

Be perswaded then, *Oh Sinners!* to cast off your Sloth and Laziness, and to rouse your selves from that drowsy Slum-

Slumber that you have long lain in, and to work for Salvation. But truly when I consider how powerful an *Orator*, and how mighty a *Charmer* Sloth is ; how easily it can stupify and benumb *Reason*, and lull Men asleep on the top of a *Mast*, and on the brinks of *Hell* ; and though God and Man call upon them, *Sinners*, *Sinners*, bestir your selves, work for your Lives, you perish eternally if you do not labour to lay hold on eternal Life, for you are falling, and *Hell-fire* is under you : Yet truly when we call and cry thus earnestly, how easily can a careless, yawning, wretched Sinner, slight all these Admonitions, baffle all these Arguments, Motives and Persuasions, though urged upon them with all vehemency and **tenderness of Affection** that can be, and turn about like a Man besotted falling fast asleep again ? When I consider this, truly I am apt to conclude, that it is but a desperate attempt to press Men any more against their Natures, and against so many Disadvantages that can soon frustrate the Efficacy of weaker Words, and to give over in Despair with that of the Prophet, *He that will be Righteous, let him be Righteous ; and he that will be Wicked, let him*

be *Wicked still*. And truly, were it not more for Conscience of Duty than for any Hope of Success, I would not speak one Word more upon the Subject ; Success I mean upon those who are altogether carnal, whose Hearts *Satan* hath filled, and whose Ears *Satan* hath stopt; we may call long enough and loud enough ere these Men will awake; or if they do sometimes give a Look upwards, they soon close their Eyes again and slumber away into Destruction. And yet truly, if variety of Motives, if Strength of Arguments and Persuasions would prevail, we might hope for this seldom-seen Success ; why then let us consider these following Particulars.

I.  
To work  
for Salva-  
tion is a  
great and  
weighty  
Work.

First, Consider Sinners, you have a great and weighty Work to do, and therefore it is time, yea, high time that you were up and doing. Believe it Sirs, God hath not placed you here in this World, as the *Leviathan* in the great Waters, only to play and sport; were it so, you might take your Ease, hold your Arms in your Bosoms, and follow your Delights and Pleasures; and let him be blam'd that ever should disturb or discourage you.

I know not whether some may not think that we *Ministers* are *Task-Masters*, and that we make more ado than needs. No, Sirs, it is God that hath set you your Work; we do only tell you how great it is, and of how great concernment it is to you that it be done; and if you will not do it who can help it? We have no *Scourges* or *Scorpions* to drive you to your Work, but God hath to punish you if you neglect it; and why is it so generally neglected, but because Men do not seriously consider how great it is. Most Men acknowledg that it must be done; but because they look upon it as that which may speedily and quickly be dispatched, they drive it before them from Day to Day, and think to huddle it up at the end of their Lives: Then when they are fit for no other Imployment, and least of all fit for this Imployment, then they think to do the Works of God. I shall here lay down three Particulars to convince Sinners of the greatness of this Work, and because it is so great a Work, it requires that they should presently, without delay, set upon it.

I.  
Working  
for Salva-  
tion is the  
undoing  
our for-  
mer  
Works.

*First*, It is a Work in which Sinners must undo all that they have wrought in their whole Lives before. *Oh Sinner*, think what hast thou been doing this twenty, thirty, forty Years or more ! Hast thou not instead of working out thine own Salvation with Fear and Trembling , been working out thine own Condemnation without Fear or Trembling ? Hast thou not been working the Works of Darkness ? Hast thou not been *working the Works of thy Father the Devil*, as our Saviour tells the Jews ? Truly this is not so much working as making of Work ; all this must be undone again, or you your selves must be for ever undone ; you must unrip and unravel your whole Lives by a deep and bitter Repentance ; you are gone far in the way that leads to Death and Destruction , and you must tread back every Step, and at every Step shed many salt and briny Tears before ever you come into the Way that leads to Life and Happiness ; and is it not yet time to begin ? Can the Work of so many Years be undone, think you, in one moment ? No, *Sin* and *Satan* make their Works more durable and lasting, than to be so easily

easily and speedily spoiled. It were the Work of an Age, yea, of Eternity it self if possibly we could so spend it, rather than of a few faint late Thoughts, to get an Humiliation deep enough, and a Sorrow sad enough, to bear any the least proportion to any of the least Sins that we have committed: Do not hope or think that your many great and sinful Actions shall ever be blown away with a slight and general Confession; or that ever they shall be wash'd away with a slight, and overly Repentance.

What says holy David? *Thou tellest my Psal. 56.8. Wanderings, put thou my Tears into thy Bottle.* Thou hast my Wandrings by Number, but thou hast also my Tears by Measure. There must be some proportion betwixt the Humiliation and the Sins; great Sins call for great Sorrow, and long continuance in Sin requires a continued and prolonged Repentance. Is it not then yet high time to begin? Have you not already made Work enough for your whole Lives, should they be longer than they are like to be? Nay, and will not every Day of your Lives make Work enough for it self? What says our Saviour? *Sufficient Mat. 8.34. for the day is the evil thereof.* Truly the Evils

Evils that we every Day commit, is sufficient Work for the Sorrow and Repentance of that Day to undo. Now then begin this undoing Work; the longer you delay, still the more will lie upon your Hands, still the more Sins you have to repent of. We already complain, That the Work God hath set us is too hard and too grievous, and yet such foolish Creatures are we that we make it more and more difficult by our Delays, adding to the strictness of Gods Commands the necessity of a severe Repentance. And therefore it is Prudence, as well as Duty, to begin this repenting, this undoing Work betimes, that so the greatness of the Work, and the shortness of the time to do it in, may not at last dismay and confound us.

2.  
*Variety of Duties to be perform'd in working out of Salvation.* Secondly, Consider the great variety of Duties that must be gone through in the working out of Salvation, and this will evince how great a Work it is. A Christian's Work is a Life full of Actions and Employments, there should be no gap nor void space at all in it, but all should be filled up with Duties ranked in their several Orders, that as soon as he passeth through one he should enter upon

upon another, that where one leaves him another may find him. Thus a Christian should go from one Duty to another; from hearing the Word to Meditation, from Meditation unto Prayer, from Prayer to the acting of Grace; and in all there should be much striving and struggling with the Heart, and much carefulnes and circumspection over the Way and Life.

Now there are *Four* great and usual Duties every Man hath to do, which is enough to fill up all the time of his Life, were it stretched and tenter'd out to the end of our time.

*First*, He is to get the Truth and Reality of Grace wrought in him; this is his first and general Work: And this will cost a Man much Sweat and Anguish, for this he must suffer many Pangs and Throw's of the New Birth, and shall lye under many Fears and Jealousies, lest Hypocrify and Presumption should cause him to mistake in a Matter of such infinite Concernment.

*Secondly*, He is to draw forth, and to act this Grace when once it is wrought in

1.  
To get  
the Truth  
of Grace.

2.  
To act  
Grace.

in him. This is the next Work of a true Christian, continually to act Faith, Love, Patience, Humility, and to let all have their perfect Work: And there is no moment of a Man's Life so idle, but all may administer some Occasion or Object for the exercise of Grace.

3. *To grow in Grace.* *Thirdly*, A Christian's next Work is continually to grow and increase in Grace: *To go from Strength to Strength, to be changed from Glory to Glory.* Still to be adding Cubits to his spiritual Stature, till he is grown to such a height and tallness in Grace, that his Head shall reach into Heaven and be Crowned there in absolute Perfection, with a Crown of Glory and Immortality. Here is that Work that will keep you in Employment all your Days; and if you can find one spare minute in your whole Lives wherein you have not some Duty to perform, then give over and sit still. But besides all this,

4. *Christians must labour for Assurance of Grace.* *Fourthly*, Another Work of a Christian is earnestly to labour after the Evidence and Assurance of Grace in himself. *Give all diligence*, says the Apostle, *to make your Calling and Election sure.* Still

a Christian must be ascending, ascending from a probable Conjecture to a good Persuasion, from a good Persuasion to a full Assurance, from that to a Rejoycing with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. These now are the general Works that should take up the Lives of Christians, and to these are subservient almost an infinite number of Particulars, some whereof are means whereby these great Things are obtained, others are Concomitants or the Effects and Fruits of them ; but I will not so much as mention any of them now.

For shame then, O Christians, since that your Work is so great, why will you sit still as if you knew not how to employ your selves ? Besides , there is great variety in your Work, and this usually breeds some kind of Delight. You are not always to be toiling and drudging at the same thing : But as Bees fly from one Flower to another and suck sweetness from each of them ; so should a Christian pass from one Duty to another, and draw forth the sweetnes of Communion with God from every one of them.

*Thirdly,*

3.  
To work  
for Salva-  
tion a dif-  
ficult  
Work.

Thirdly, To evince the greatness of this Work, consider it is a Work that must be carried on against many Encounters and strong Oppositions that a Christian will certainly meet with; within are strong Corruptions, without are strong Temptations, you have a treacherous and deceitful Heart within, and this Traitor holds Intelligence and League with your great Enemy the Devil without: You are sure to meet with Difficulties, Affronts and Discouragements from a peevish ill-condition'd World in which you live: Never any yet could escape free to Heaven without meeting with these Things. And doth not all this call upon you to work and strive for Salvation? Is it a time to sit still when you have all this Opposition to break through, so many Temptations to resist, so many Corruptions to mortify, *Satan* that old Serpent to repel, and make him become a *flying Serpent*? Doth not all this require a morose Constancy, and a kind of sour Resolvedness to go thorough the ways of Obedience, notwithstanding all Opposition? These great Things are not to be atchieved without great Pains and Labour;

bour; and therefore, if you resolve to do no more than a few heartless Wishes, no more than a few more heartless Duties will amount to, never raise your Expectations so high as Salvation; for let me tell you, Salvation will not be obtained at such a rate as this; no, there must be great Struglings and Labour, with earnest Contendings, if ever you intend to be saved.

And thus much for the *first Argument* taken from the consideration of the greatness of the Work: To work Salvation out is a great Work and requireth great Pains. But lest the setting out the greatness of this Work, should rather deter and fright Men from it than excite and quicken their Endeavours to it, let me add a second Thing;

And that is to consider what an infinite, incomparable Mercy it is that God will allow you to work for your Lives, that he sets Life and Death before you, and gives them into your Hands to take your Choice: If you will indulge your Sloth, then you choose Death; but Life may be yours if you will: It will indeed cost you much Pains and Labour, but yet it may be yours;

2.

It is infinite Mercy that Sinners may work for Salvation.

yours: And is it not infinite Mercy that Salvation and Happiness may be yours, though upon any Terms? Wicked Men are apt to say, *O how happy had we been if God had never commanded us to Work; if he had never required from us such harsh and difficult Duties, if we were but once free from this hard Task and heavy Burden of Obedience!* But alas! foolish Sinners, they know not what they say; as happy as they count this to be, yet if God required no working from them, he should then shew them just so much Mercy as he doth to the Devils and damned Spirits, and no more, from whom God requires no Duty as well as from whom he receives no Duty, and unto whom he intends no Mercy. You think it a hard Restraint possibly, to be kept under the strict Commands of the Law: Oh! that God required no such Observances from you. But what do you desire herein but only the unhappy Privilege of the Damned, to be without Law and without Commands? But should God fend to the Spirits now imprison'd, and should he declare to them, that if they would Work they should be saved, oh! how would they leap in their Chains at such glad Tidings as these

these are, and count it part of Salvation that there was but a possibility of it. No, but God commands nothing from them, because he intends nothing but Wrath upon them ; he will not vouchsafe so much Mercy to them as to require those Duties from them, that you repine and murmur at as grievous. And furthermore consider this, if you do not now work, but perish under your Sloth, in *Hell* you will think it an infinite Mercy if God would command you more rigid and severe Obedience than ever he commanded from you on Earth: It would be a great Mercy there, if it might be your Duty to Repent, and Pray, and Believe; nay, you would count a Command then to be as comfortable as a Promise ; for indeed there is no Command but connotes a Promise: No, but these things shall not so much as be your Duty in *Hell*; for there you shall be freed for ever from this rigorous and dreadful Law of God, that now you so much complain of and murmur against. Oh ! therefore be persuaded while you are yet under the Mercy of the Law, (give me leave to call it so) and while you have so many Promises couched in every Command,

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before God hath left off his merciful Commanding, before the time of Duty be expired, be persuaded to Work : Delay not, you know not how long God will vouchsafe to require any thing from you ; and as soon as that ceaseth, truly you are in Hell. And this is the second Argument to press this Duty upon you. Work, and that speedily too; while you may Work there is hope that upon your working you may be saved ; and therefore while God calls upon you, and whilst he will accept of Obedience from you, it is time for you to begin to work.

3. *Time to work for Salvation in, is very short.* Thirdly, Consider, what a short scantling of Time is allowed you to do your great Work in. And this I shall branch out into two Particulars.

1. *First, Consider how sad it will be for your Time to be run out before your great Work be done. Alas! what are threescore Years, if we were all sure to live so long, from the date of this present moment? How short a space is it for us to do that which is of eternal Concernment in, and yet how few of us shall live to that which we so improperly*

perly call old Age? Our Candle is lighted, and it is but small at the best; and to how many of us is it already sunk in the Socket, and brought to a Snuff? and how soon the Breath of God may blow it out, neither you nor I know. Night is hastning upon us, the Grave expects us, and bids other Corpses make room for us: Death is ready to grasp us in its cold Arms and to carry us before God's Tribunal; and, alas, how little of our great Work is done! What can any shew that they have done? Where are the actings of Faith, the labour of Love, the perfect Works of Patience? Where are those Graces that are either begotten or increased? Where are the Corruptions that you have mortify'd? These are Works that require Ages to perform them in, and yet you neglect them that have but a few Days, nay, possibly but a few Minutes to do them in.

*But what, is God severe? Is God unjust, to require so much Work to be done in so little time?*

No, far be it from us to say thus: Though our Work be great, yet our Time is long enough to perform it in, if it were well improved. We do indeed consume away our precious Days,

G 2 and

and waste our Life and Light, exhaust our Strength, and lay out our Endeavours upon Vanities and Trifles, on nothing but Emptiness and Folly. And that Life which the *Prophet* tells us, *is but as a Tale*, truly we spend it as a *Dream*: We sleep and drowsie, and suffer our precious Minutes to run and waste away doing nothing to any good purpose, till the Night is shutting in, till the Night of Darkness come upon us, and then the greatness of our Work will confound us, and cause Despair rather than excite Endeavours. Have you never known any who at the close of their Lives, having neglected their great Work, have spent that little time that they had then left them, in crying out for more time? And thus it may be with you also, if your Consciences be not awakned sooner than by the Pains and Disquiets of a *sick Bed*; then, with Horror, you may cry out, *More Time, Lord, more Time*. But it will not then be granted, the Term is fixed, the last Hour is struck, the last Sand is run; and as you and your Work shall then be found, so you must go together into *Eternity*. This is such a Consideration as must needs prevail with all Men, if they

they would but lay it to Heart: My Time is but short and momentany, I am but of Yesterday, and possibly I may not be to Morrow, and God hath suspended *Eternity* upon the Improvement of this moment; a few Hours will determine my everlasting State and Condition; according as these few are spent, so will my Doom be, either for *Eternal Happiness* or for *Eternal Misery*. And why should my precious Soul be so vile in my own Eyes, as to lose it for ever through Sloth and Negligence? Why should I hearken to the Allurements of my own Corruptions, or to the Enticements and Persuasions of *Satans* Temptations? No, stand off, for I am working for *Eternity*, an *Eternity* that is but a few Days hence, a boundless, a bottomless, an endless *Eternity*, into which I know not how soon I may enter; and Woe to me, yea, a thousand Woes to me that ever I was born, if my great Work be not done before the Days of *Eternity* come upon me. This is such a Motive as methinks should make every Man that hears it, and hath but a sense what *Eternity* is, presently to bestir and rouse up himself, and give God and his Soul no rest

till his Immortal Soul be secured, and well provided for, for *Eternity*. To me there is no greater Argument of the Witchcraft and Sorcery that Sin and Satan useth to besot the Reason and Judgment of rational Creatures, than to hear of such Truths, Truths that are not to be denied or doubted of, and yet Men to live at such a rate as they do, so vainly, so fruitlessly, so lazily, so securely and presumptuously, as if their *Eternity* were to be expected and enjoyed here, or that there was none to come hereafter.

2. *Secondly*, The consideration of the shortness of our Life, may serve as a great Incouragement to work. The consideration of the burthenesomeness and trouble of working for Salvation may doubtless fright many from engaging therein; Oh! it is a Work very painful and laborious, and this discourageth them. But know, *O Sinner!* though it be grievous, yet it is but short Work; it is to last no longer than our frail, short Life doth last: And O! how unreasonable is it to complain, as most do, of our Work being too long and too tedious; and of our Lives, as being too short

short and brittle? for our Work is to be no longer than our Lives. A Child of God doth not, at least he should not, desire to live longer than his great Work is done: And truly when it is finished, it is a great piece of *Self-denial* in him to be content to abide here in this World any longer: And in the mean while this may support him, that it shall not be long that he shall thus wrestle with Temptations, and thus struggle with Corruptions: *Death* will come in to his Help, and put an end to his Toil and Labour; and though he brings a Dart in one Hand, yet he brings a Reward and Wages in the other Hand; and this may be his great Encouragement.

*Fourthly*, My next Argument to press this Duty of working out of our own Salvation, shall consist of three or four Gradations. And,

4.

*First*, Consider, we are all of us very busy, active Creatures; the frame and constitution of our Natures is such as we must be working some Work or other: And therefore since we must be working, why should we not work

I.  
we are all  
busy,  
active  
Creatures

the Works of God? We do not simply exhort Sinners to work, neither indeed need we: You have active Faculties and stirring Principles within you, that must and will be still in Employment; and when your Hands cease, yet then your Hearts and Thoughts are at work: Your whole Lives are nothing but Actions; yea, when your Thoughts themselves are most unbent and most remiss, when they are most vanishing and glimmering, so that your selves scarce know what they are, yet then are they visibly working, though you perceive it not. Now what is it that God requires of you? It is not that you should be more employed than you are, that you should do more than you do; for that is impossible, because you never are idle doing nothing; but it is, that what you do should be done in order unto Heaven and Salvation; and how reasonable is such a Command as this? It is not more Work that God expects from you, only other Work; your Thoughts need not be more than they are, but they must be more Spiritual than they are; your Desires no more, but only more Gracious; your Actions no more, but only they must be more Holy than now

now they are: Let but Grace regulate what Nature doth, and the Art of working out of your Salvation is attained. The Wheels of a Watch move as fast and as quick when it goes false as when it goes true; and if the Watch be but at first set right and true, the same activity that makes it go false, will make the Motions go right and orderly: Truly you your selves are like your Watches; your Faculties are the Wheels of your Souls, and they move and click as fast when they go false, as when they go right; and if Grace doth but once set them right, the same activity of Nature that makes them work fallly and go amiss, will also continue their Motion orderly and regular when once they are set right. Well then, whatever your Trade be, whether it be a Trade of Sin, or whether it be a Trade of Holiness, you must be working at it. And let me tell you, Religion and Holiness are so far from increasing of your Work, that they rather lessen and contract it: What says our Sa-  
viour? *Martha, Martha, thou art care-  
ful about many things; but one thing is ne-  
cessary.* So may I say; *Sinners,* you are careful and busy your selves about many things,

Luke 10.  
41.

things, but there is but one thing that is necessary ; many things indeed you trouble your selves with, the Cares of the World, the Temptations of Satan, the Corruptions of your own Hearts, these distract you, yea, very Trifles and Impertinencies themselves give you full Imployment ; this Lust storms and rageth, that Lust flatters and enticeth ; this is impetuous, that is insinuating ; the one impells, the other allures ; and it may be after all, Conscience begins to grow terrible, giving the Sinner no quiet in doing of that which Lust would let him have no rest till he had done : So that betwixt them, of all Mens Lives in the World his is the most toilsome and vexatious. Since then you can save no Labour by being as you are, why will you not change your Work ? You are now in constant Imployment as you are, and no more is required of you in the ways of *Obedience* ; nay, you are now divided, distracted and even torn in pieces, betwixt divers Lusts and Pleasures, all which cry *give, give*, and all are eager and importunate, so that you know not which to turn to first. But in working for Salvation your Imployment is but the one thing necessary, which

which though indeed it calls for the same Endeavours and Industry which now you use in the Service of Sin, yet by reason of its Uniformity, is less distractive and less cumbersome: And that is the first Gradation.

Secondly, Consider this, You must work either in Gods Service, or in the Devils Drudgery: And choose you whether you had rather be Satan's Slaves, or God's Servants; nay, indeed choose whether? Is it a matter of Choice with Men, who have rational and immortal Souls? Do you not all profess yourselves to be the Servants of the living God? Do you not all wear his Livery? Would not the vilest and most profligate Sinner willingly lurk under the Name and Badge of a Christian, and count it a great Wrong done him, should any so much as doubt of his Salvation? And wherefore is this, but because they are ashamed of their Service, and of their own black Master? But alas! it is in vain to renounce him in Words; for if your Works be not for God, if they be not such as Religion exacts, as the Holy Ghost inspires, as Grace performs, and as Salvation calls for from you, his  
Slaves

All Men  
worki-  
ther in  
Gods Ser-  
vice or the  
Devils  
Drudgery.

Slaves you are, and though you profess to deny him, yet in your Works you own him.

3.  
Those that  
work for  
Satan,  
work for  
their own  
Damna-  
tion.

Thirdly, *If you work for Satan you do but work for your own Damnation*: For work you must and will, and this is all the Reward and Wages that you can justly expect from the Service of Sin and *Satan*; and of this a just God and a malicious *Devil* will look that you shall not be defrauded; but as your *Ephah* hath been full of Iniquity and Abominations, so shall your *Cup* be full of Wrath and Indignation. Think, *Oh Sinner*, think how these Masters, whom thou now servest, will in *Hell* insult over thee and upbraid thee. Is this he our faithful and industrious Servant? He, who preferred our Misery before his own Happiness, whose precious Soul was not precious to him for our sakes? And is he now come whither his ways lead him? Prepare a Place quickly for him; let his *Darkness* be horrid and dismal, his Works were so; let his *Chains* be strong and massy, the Bonds of his Iniquities were so; let his *unquenchable Fire* be piercing and vehement; let his *Torment* be next unto my self; this, this will

will be the insulting of your Master then. *Oh Sinners* consider! Is this the Reward and Preferment that you work for? God forbid, Mercy prevent, you will say; nay believe it, Mercy will not prevent, God will not forbid, unless you your selves labour to prevent it; all this must be your Condemnation as unavoidably as if God had no such Attribute of Mercy belonging to his Nature. This Sinners know, and are persuaded of the Truth of it, unless they are *Atheists*; and if you are, truly it will not be long before your own Sense and Feeling will convince you of the Truth of these things, to your eternal Grief and Sorrow: And if you do believe this, why do you not rowse up your selves and fall to work? If you are resolved for *Hell*, for a foreseen and forewarned *Hell*, who then can stop you? And unless you are resolved for *Hell*, methinks I might have done and need proceed no further. Tell me therefore, *Oh Sinners*, are you not all persuaded by these Terrors? Will you not from this moment labour, and struggle, and strive, and take any Pains in the ways of Obedience, rather than ruin your own Souls, and thrust them down into the

the Pit of Destruction? I might be confident *Sinners* thus resolve to do, were I speaking now to Men that were themselves. But Men's Reasons are besotted, and their Ears are open only to the *Devil*, and to the base Allurements of the *Flesh*: And when we have done our utmost in persuading Sinners, in the end we must turn our Exhortations to them, into Prayers to God for them, that he would snatch them as Brands out of the Fire and burning, into which they, like drunken Men, are casting themselves and lying down in.

4.  
The same  
pains that  
some take  
to damn  
their Souls  
might  
eternally  
save them.  
*Isa. 5. 18.*

Fourthly, Once more, the same Pains that possibly some take to damn their own Souls, might suffice eternally to save them. The same Toil and Labour that some undergo for Hell and Destruction, might have brought them to Heaven and Happiness, had it been but that way laid out. The Prophet tells us of some, That draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and sin as it were with Cart Ropes. That is, they are so enslaved to the work of the Devil, that he puts them into his Team, and makes them draw and strain for their Iniquities; and he doth them a Courtesy when their Sins come easily to them, for

for so the Phrase imports. And we  
read of some in another Prophet, *That sin with both Hands greedily.* And the  
*Psalmist tells us of those, That devise mis-  
chief upon their Beds, and that travel with  
Iniquity.* That is; they are in as much  
Pain and Torment till their wicked De-  
signs be accomplished, as a Woman in  
Travail is till she be delivered. Now  
Sinners, since the work of Sin is so toil-  
some, why will you not *work the Works  
of God?* Doth that Salvation that fol-  
lows Obedience fright you, or is Hea-  
ven and Glory become terrible to you?  
Is not this it that all Men desire? Do  
not your Hearts leap at the mention of  
it? What then is it that any rational  
Man can pretend, why he will not  
work? Is it because you are loth to  
take Pains? Why then are you so labo-  
rious in Sinning? Why do you so sweat  
and toil in carrying Faggots to your  
own Fire? Why are you continually  
blowing up those Flames that shall for  
ever burn you? It is in vain to plead  
this any longer that you are loth to take  
Pains; for where are there greater  
Drudges in all the World than Sinners  
are? The Devil can scarce find them  
Work enough, they out-sin his Tempta-  
tions;

tions ; and had they not that Corruption within, the scum whereof is continually boiling up in them, they must of necessity (I was going to say) sometimes be Holy , for want of Employment ; *Satan* could not find them work enough. How restless and impatient are they till they have done some wicked Work ? And sometimes they are more restless and impatient when they have done it, through the *Devils* Temptations ; and yet , notwithstanding these Torments , they will do them again. Are there now more Drudges in the World than these are ? Doth God require more Pains in his Service than these Men take ? No , he doth not : Would but Men do as much for their precious Souls , as they do against them ; would they do as much to save them , as they do to destroy and damn them ; truly their Salvation would not lie upon their Hands unwrought off.

**Objection.** But some may say in their Hearts , It is true indeed we are convinced that the Work of Sin is laborious , but yet there is pleasure in that labour : But to the Works of Obedience we find reluctance , and to struggle against that is exceeding irksome and

*and grievous, and therefore we cannot work.*

But is it so indeed? Is it all Peace and Tranquility with you when you sin? Are your Consciences so utterly feared, as that they make no Reluctancy, give you no Checks or Reproofs, when you sin? If they do, put that Reluctancy of natural Conscience against sin, into the Ballance with the Reluctancy of natural Corruption against Obedience, and the most profligate Sinner in the World shall find, though this is more strong and prevalent, yet that is more vexatious and tormenting. God requires no more Labour from you than you now take; nay, this Labour shall not put you to so much Torment as sometimes you now feel: The same Labour, with more content and satisfaction, may perfect your Salvation, that now tends only to consummate your Destruction. What Madness then is it for Men not to be persuaded to *work the Works of God*, when it will cost them less Pains, I mean less tormenting Pains? You wear your Lives in the Service of Sin, and at the end of your Days you go down to *Hell*; when with as much ease you might in-

H herit

herit *Life and Glory*, as you thus purchase *Hell and Destruction*. And is not this great Folly and Madness?

Well now, bring all these four *Gra-*  
*dations* together, and look upon them all at once, and we shall find the Argument so strong as nothing can resist it, but the perverse Reasonings of Mens own Wills; you will not because you will not: *You must work*; if you work not in God's Service, you will work in the Devil's Drudgery; if you work Satan's Work, you must receive Satan's Wages, which is the Reward of eternal Damnation; and the same Labour that you take to damn your own Souls, might suffice to save them. Wherefore then shall not God employ you as well as the Devil? Hath he not more right to you? Why should you not work out your own Happiness, as well as work out your own Misery? Doth it not concern you more? If Men would but set their Reason on work in this particular, if they would but shew themselves to be Men, they would soon set Grace on work and shew themselves to be Christians also: It is but turning the Streams of your Actions into the right Channel and the Work is done;

since

since that they will incessantly flow from you, why should they all fall like *Jordan* into the *dead Sea*, when they might as well run into the infinite *Ocean* of all Happiness, and carry your Souls along with them also?

But,

*Fifthly*, Consider this also; the Devil works constantly and industriously for your Destruction; and will not you much more work for your own Salvation? See the place of the *Apostle*, *1 Pet.* *He walks about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.* And therefore when God questions him, *Whence comest thou, Satan?* He answers, *From going up and down to and fro in the Earth, and walking in it.* What Pains doth he take to prompt Men with Temptations, to suit Objects and Occasions to their Corruptions? Still he is at their Right Hand laying Snares and Traps for them that they might fall as his Prey; and wherefore makes he all this ado? Is it not to satisfie his Malice and Hatred against Men's Souls? And shall Malice and Rancor make the Devil so laborious and unwearied to destroy Souls, and shall not your own Happiness and

Men  
should be  
as diligent  
to save  
their Souls  
as the De-  
vil is to  
destroy  
them.  
*1 Pet. 5.8.*  
*Job 1. 8.*

Salvation make you much more diligent to save your Souls? Is the *Devil* more concern'd in your Ruin, than you your selves are in your own Salvation? Shall the Death of your Souls be more dear to him, than the Life of your Souls is to your selves? Learn from *Satan* himself how to rate and value your own Souls: Did not he know them to be exceeding precious, he would never take so much Pains to get them; and did you but know how precious they are, certainly you would never lose them so contentedly. Let the *Devil* (if you will learn no otherwise) teach you the worth of your precious Souls; and since he thinks no Pains too much to ruin them, why should you think any Pains or Labour too much for to save them?

6.  
Men take  
pains in  
things of  
far less  
concern-  
ments  
than their  
Souls.

Sixthly, Consider, you your selves do Labour and take Pains in things of far lower and lesser Concernment than the Salvation of your Souls is. Men can rise up early and go to Bed late, eat the Bread of Carefulness, and all to get some little inconsiderable piece of this World to provide for a frail, short Life here; and who is there that thinks their Pains

too

too much? And why then should you not labour for a future Life in another World, that you confess to be infinitely more glorious and desirable than any thing you can obtain here? To me it is Folly so gross and senseless to be bemoan'd, if it were possible, with Tears of Blood, that Men should so toil for the low Conveniences of the World, and yet neglect the eternal Happiness of their precious and immortal Souls, as if they were not worth the looking after. *Sinners*, do you know what a vain, empty Bubble, blown up by the creating Breath of the Almighty, the World is? Do you know it, and yet will you take pains for it, yet will you grasp and ketch at it? Who would doubt when we see Men so busy about Impertinencies, and the trivial Concernments of this vain World; who would doubt, but that they were far more anxious and careful about the Things of Heaven, and the Concernments of their Souls? Who would not conclude, but that they who are so diligent about petty Trifles, had certainly made sure that their great Work was done? But, *alas*, would it not astonish Men and Angels, if we should tell them

how foolish Sinners are? Would it be believed that rational Creatures, that have immortal Souls that must be for ever saved or damn'd, should spend all their Time and Strength about nothing, never taking any Care or Thought what will become of them for ever? Would such Folly be believ'd to be in Men? And yet this Madness are most Men guilty of. We may all of us be ashamed to lift up our Heads to God, when we confess the World to be so vain and slight a Thing, that if we should get all of it, nay, should we get ten thousand of them, yet were they not all worth one Soul, that yet we should be so foolish to strive to get a vain World, to the Neglect, yea, to the Contempt of our precious Souls: It is such Folly as Men would scarce suspect that any Persons should be guilty of it, if it were not seen daily in the Practices of almost all Men.

I.  
To work  
for Salva-  
tion makes  
Men ho-  
nourable.

*Seventhly, Consider this: Are you am-  
bitious? Do you affect true Honour and  
Dignity? Yes, I know this is the great Idol  
of the World, that which every one falls  
down to and worships: Well then, Sinners,  
here is a way to prefer you all. To work  
for*

for Salvation is the most honourable Employment in the World, an Honour that will pose and nonplus the most towering and raised *Ambition*, when once it is spiritualized. Alas, what poor and contemptible Things are the Grandees and great Ones of the World, though they take great State and Pomp upon them, and will scarce own their Inferiors for their Fellow-Creatures; nay, will scarce own God himself for their Superior, are yet but like painted *Flies* that play and buzz a while in the Sun-shine, and then moulder away and come to nothing? All worldly Honour and Pomp is but imaginary; but would you have that which is solid and substantial? Christ tells you how it is to be attained. *If any Man serve me, him John 12.  
will my Father honour.* Whatever Honour we have, we hold it by Service; our Work is not only Duty, but Preference also: If any Man serve me, he shall be honoured. Would you be enrolled for *Right Honourable* in Heavens Treasury? Would you be *Peers* of that Kingdom with *Saints* and glorified *Angels*? Then honour God. And how shall you honour him, but by obeying him? And he who thus honours God,

God will honour him. This is the only real Honour, all other is but airy, fictitious Titles ; like *Cyphers*, which as they are placed, stand for Hundreds and Thousands, but are all of the same Value when huddled together. So truly the great Ones of the World, if not made honourable by Obedience to God, have but imaginary Excellency ; and when *Death* once shuffles and huddles them together ; *Nobles* with *Ignobles*, will the Dust and Ashes of the one stand at a Distance and make Obeyance to the other ? No, all Honour here signifies no more than a *King* upon a *Stage*. But here is a way to attain true Honour, here is the way to it by becoming Servants, not to Command, but to Obey ; not to be imperious over others, but to work your selves ; this is true Honour. Now I shall in three Things demonstrate the Honour of working for Salvation, that if Men be not very lowly spirited, they may be excited unto this honourable Work.

Wherein  
the Ho-  
nour of  
working  
for Salva-  
tion con-  
fists.

I.  
It is a spi-  
ritual and  
pure Work

First, It is pure, spiritual, refined Work. In Services among Men, the leis of Filth and Drudgery there is in them, the more creditable they are accounted.

It

It is an Honour to be employ'd in higher and more cleanly Work, when others are busied about baser Employments. Now, Christians, your Work is the highest and most noble Service imaginable; you are not at all to set your Hands to any foul Office; you have nothing to do with that Mire and Sink in which wicked Men are raking, yea, and it is their Work to do it; no, but your Work is all spiritual, consisting of the same pure Employment that the *Angels* in Heaven spend their Eternity about: *Holy Thoughts, divine Affections, heavenly Meditations, spiritual Duties*, in these lies your Work, which because of its Purity is therefore very honourable.

*Secondly*, Your Work is honourable because it is the Service of a most honourable Master. We account it a great Credit to tend immediately upon the Person of some *Prince* or *Potentate*; but what is this to their Honour who are called always to attend upon the Person of God himself, who is *King* of *Kings* and *Lord* of *Lords*, to be continual Waiters about his Throne? God hath but two Thrones; his Throne of Glory

2.  
It is the  
Service of  
an honour-  
able Ma-  
ster.

Glory in the highest Heavens, about which *Angels* and *glorified Saints* are the Attendants ; and his Throne of Grace to which you are called. *Angels* and *Saints* are but your Fellow-Attendants ; and if they see his Glory in the highest Exaltation, you are admitted to see it in the next degree ; yea, and herein is your Honour so great, that you are capable but of one Preferment more, and that is of being removed from one Throne to the other, from attending upon the Throne of Grace to attend upon the Throne of Glory, so great is your Honour.

3.  
The Ser-  
vice of  
God makes  
us his  
Friends.

Thirdly, *Your Work is such as makes you not so much Servants, as Friends unto God.* It is an Honour to be Servant unto a King, but much more of a Servant to become a Favourite. Why thus it is in the service of God ; you are not only Servants, but Friends and Favourites. *You are my Friends, if you do whatsoever I command you.* A strange Speech ; one would think the doing of what is commanded is the Office of a Servant, rather than of a Friend : No, says Christ, *Henceforth I call you not Servants but Friends ; you are my Friends if you*

you do whatsoever I command you. And certainly no Title so truly glorious as that which God put upon *Abraham*, *To be the Friend of God*. Well then, let wicked Men go on scoffing and mocking at Obedience in the People of God, let them look on them as poor and low spirited Persons, yet can there be no Honour like unto theirs, to be Attendants upon, yea, the Friends of the great God of Heaven; and there can be no Discredit so base as theirs who are Slaves to the Devil, who is Gods Slave; to be a Slave unto the Devil, whom the People of God have in part subdued and overcome, and over whom they shall shortly at once perfectly triumph.

And now having thus, by several Arguments, prest this great Duty of working out of our own Salvation, I should now proceed to some other Things that are necessary to be spoken unto from this Doctrin: But because this is a Duty of so vast Importance, and of so universal Concernment unto all, and the Slothfulness and Backwardness of many so great, and if persisted in, will be so ruinous and destructive, I shall further urge the practice  
of

of this Duty upon the Consciences of Sinners, by these following Considerations.

I.  
Working  
for Salva-  
tion is de-  
lightful  
Work.

First, *This working for Salvation is the most delightful Work and Employment that a Christian can be engaged in.* What is it that makes the whole World so busy in the Service of Sin and Satan, but only Pleasure which they either find or imagine? The *Devil* baits all his Temptations with this enticing Witchcraft, which the World calls Pleasure, and this is that makes them so successful. But hath the *Devil* ingrossed all Pleasure unto his Service? Can the Ways of God promise no Delight? Are they only ruff and rugged Ways? *David* certainly thought otherwise, when speaking of the Commandments of God, he tell us, *They were sweeter than the Hony and the Hony-comb.* He could squeeze Hony out of them; it is an Expression that sets forth the exceeding Pleasantness and Delight that is to be found in the ways of Obedience. And truly the whole *Book of Psalms* is abundantly copious in setting forth that Delight that is to be found in the ways of God. Ask therefore the Children

Psalm  
19. 10.

of

of God, who are the only sufficient Judges in this Matter, and they will tell you with one Consent, that they know no Delight on Earth comparable to that Delight that is to be found in Obedience. Indeed if you are only taken with a soft, luxurious, washy Pleasure, this is not to be found in the ways of Holiness; but if a severe Delight can affect you, a Delight that shall not effeminate but innoble you; if you desire a masculine, rational, vigorous Pleasure and Delight, you need not seek any further for it than in the ways of Obedience.

Now there are two Things that make this working for Salvation to be so pleasant; the suitableness of this Work to the Agent or Worker, and the visible Success and Progress of the Work it self: And both these make the working out of Salvation exceeding pleasant and delightful to the People of God.

Two  
Things  
make  
working  
for Salva-  
tion plea-  
sant.

*First*, It is a Work suited to their Natures, and that makes it pleasant. As Jesus Christ had in a phisical Sense, so every true Christian hath in a moral Sense two Natures in one Person:

I.  
Suitable-  
ness of the  
Work to  
the Agent

There

There is the divine Nature or the Nature of God, and there is the humane, corrupt Nature, the Nature of sinful Man, and each of these have Inclinations suited unto them ; there is the carnal part, and that is too apt to be seduced and drawn away with the Pleasures of Sin, that are Objects proportioned to the carnal part : But then there is also a divine, and if I may so call it, a supernatural Nature, imprinted by Regeneration, that only doth relish heavenly and spiritual Things : So that it is not more natural to a godly Man by reason of the Propensions of the old Nature to sin against God, than it is natural to him, by reason of the Propensions of the new Nature, to obey and serve God. Now when Nature acts suitably to its own sway and *pondus*, this must needs cause two Things : First, *Facility and Easiness* : Secondly, *Delight and Complacency*. Streams flow from the Fountain with ease, because they take but their natural Course. So the Works of Obedience flow easily from that Fountain Principle of Grace that is broken up in the Hearts of the Children of God, because they flow naturally from them ; and therefore because Nature

ture makes things easie, that easiness will make them pleasant and delightful. It is true indeed when they work, there is an opposition and reluctancy from their other contrary Nature; for as they act suitably to the one, so they act quite contrary to the other Nature: But doth not the gracious and new Nature as strongly wrestle against and oppose the Workings and Eruptions of the old Nature, as the old doth the Workings of the new? Yes, it doth; and therefore you that are truly Regenerate, never sin because of the easiness of it, because of its suitableness, because else you must offer violence to your Nature if you resist a Temptation. Do you not offer violence to your Nature if you close with that Temptation? You are not all of one piece, if I may so speak, if you are Regenerate. And what? must the corrupt part only be indulged and gratified, and must the renewed part be always opposed? Why should not Grace, since it is as much, nay, more your self than Sin is, why should not that have the same scope and liberty to act freely as Sin doth? Truly these Things are Riddles to wicked Men, and they are unfit Judges in this Case;

they

they wonder what we mean when we speak of Easiness and Delight in ways of Obedience, which they never found to be otherwise than the most burthen-some Thing in the World. And truly it is no wonder, for they have no Principle suited to these Things, they are made up only of the old Nature, that is as contrary and repugnant to them as Darkness is to Light. But if once God renew and sanctifie them, then they will confess as we do, that the Works of God have more easiness in them than the generality of the World do imagine; and therefore St. Paul tells, *That he delighted in the Law of God after the inward Man.* But why after the inward Man? But because though his corrupt part was contrary thereunto, yet his renewed part, which he calls his inward Man, was suited to the Duties of the Law of God, and carried him out as naturally to Obedience as the Spark flies upward. And hence it is that the Children of God delight in the ways of Obedience, because they suit with their new Nature that is implanted in them.

Rom. 7.  
22.

*Secondly,*

Secondly, Another Thing that makes working for Salvation so delightful, is, Progress <sup>2.</sup> That visible Success that the Children of God gain, and that visible progress that they make in this Work. Nothing doth usually cause greater Delight in Work than to see some riddance in it, and that we are like at length to bring it to some issue. So truly this is that which mightily delights the Children of God to see that their Work goes forward, that their Graces thrive, that their Corruptions pine and consume away, that they are much nearer Salvation than when they first believed, that they are perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, and every Day growing nearer unto Heaven and Happiness than other: And though these Works of theirs are now imperfect, yet they shall be shortly finished and consummate in Glory.

Well then, if Pleasure and Delight do affect you, here you see is that which is solid and substantial; it springs from Success in your Work, and from that suitableness that is in your renewed part thereunto also. And therefore the

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more Work, the greater Delight you find; because the greater progres you make, and the more suitable to it your Will becomes. Nay, your Delight is of the same Nature with that which you shall enjoy in Heaven: The Work the Blessed are there employ'd in is of the same Nature with yours; only their suitableness to it is perfect, and therefore their Delight and Pleasure is perfect: And accordingly the more suitable your Hearts are to your Work, the more Delight and Pleasure you will find in it. This is that makes Heaven a place of Happiness because there is no Corruption, no Body of Sin and Death there to make those Duties that are there required from glorified Saints to be irksom and grievous to them.

2.  
**The Reward of working for Salvation.**

Secondly, Consider the exceeding greatness of your Reward. Doth Job fear God for nought, was the Caval of Satan, when God applauded himself that he had such a Servant as Job was upon the Earth. The Devil himself thought it no wonder that Job should fear and serve a rewarding God, a God whose Hands are as full of Blessings as his Mouth is full

of Commands : And yet what were these great Somethings that the *Devil* envies *Job* for (and thinks every one would have done as much as he, if they had but as great a Recompence for it) ?

It was but *Hedging of him about, but Job 1. 10.*  
*blessing of the Works of his Hands, and in-*  
*creasing of his Substance,* as it is in *Job 1.*

Why, alas ! these are poor mean Rewards to what God intends to bestow ; such Rewards they are as that God still reckons himself in Arrears to his Children, till he hath given them something better than he can bestow upon them here upon Earth : These Things he casts but as *Crumbs unto Dogs*, when he reserves a far better Portion for his Children. And yet *Satan* thinks *Job* well paid for his Service in having of these lower Enjoyments, in causing the Works of his Hands to prosper ; *Doth Job serve God for nought ?* And therefore if *Satan* doth not wonder that *Job* fears and serves God for Temporal Mercies, will it not be to the great wonder of *Satan* himself that you should not fear and serve God, that have infinitely better Things promised to you than Temporal Mercies are ?

Do you deserve your Breath, in spending of it some few Hours in Prayer? Or do you deserve your plentiful Estate, by laying out some small part of it for God? Why, to be able to Think or Speak, to enjoy Health and Strength, are such Mercies, though outward Mercies, as can never be recompenced to God, although you should think of nothing but of his Glory, and speak of nothing but of his Praise; although you should impair your Health and waste your Strength, and languish away in the performance of holy Duties: These, tho' they are Obligations to Obedience, yet they are not the Reward of Obedience; no, far higher and more glorious Things are provided, promised and shall be conferred upon you, if you will but work. For there is First, your set standing Wages, and that is eternal Salvation; no les. And Secondly, besides this there are many incident Vails accrue to God's Servants, in their performance of his Service: And is not here Reward and Wages enough?

*First,*

First, Consider there is that eternal weight of Glory that shall be the Reward of the Saints in Heaven. This now is so great that it is impossible for you to conceive : It is such as Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, nor hath it ever enter'd into, no nor can it ever enter into the Heart of Man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him, as the Apostle speaks. If St. Paul were now preaching and pressing this very Consideration of the infinite, glorious Reward, it would possibly be expected, that he who suffered a Translation, and was admitted as a Spy into the Land of Promise, should at his return make some Relation of it, and discover something of the Riches and Glory of that Place ; and would not all flock about him, as Men do about Travellers, to enquire for a Description of the Country whence they come ? Who the People and Inhabitants are ? What are their Manners and Customs ? What is their Employment ? Who is their King, and what Subjection they yield unto him ? Thus inquisitive truly our Curiosity would be. And yet when St. Paul purposely relates his Voyage to

the other World, all that he speaks of it is only this, *I knew a Man caught up into Paradise, who heard things that no Man could, nor is it lawful for any Man to utter.* The Glory of Heaven is such that it can never be fully known till it be fully enjoyed; and yet if Heaven were ever made chrystally transparent to you, if ever God opened you a Window into it, and then opened the Eye of your Faith to look in by that Window, think what it was that you there discovered, what inaccessible Light, what cherishing Love, what daunting Majesty, what infinite Purity, what over-loading Joy, what insupportable and sinking Glory, what Rays and Sparklings from Crowns and Scepters, but more from the Glances and Smiles of God upon the heavenly Host, who forever warm and Sun themselves in his Presence: And when you have thought all this, then think once again that all your Thoughts are but Shadows and Glimmerings, that there is Dust and Ashes in the Eye of your Faith that makes all these Discoveries come infinitely short of the Native Glory of these Things; and then you may guess, and guess somewhat near what Heaven

ven is. Nay as God, by reason of his infinite Glory, is better known to us by Negatives than by Affirmatives, by what he is not than by what he is ; so is Heaven, by reason of the greatness of its Glory, better known to us by what it is not, than by what it is ; and we may best conceive of it when it is told us : There is nothing there that may affright or afflict us, nothing that may grieve or trouble us, nothing that may molest or disquiet us, but we shall have the highest and sweetest Delight and Satisfaction that the vast and capacious Soul of Man can either receive or imagine. Are you now burthened with Sin and Corruption, those Infirmities that tho' they are unavoidable, yet they make your Lives a Burthen to you ? Why the old Man shall never more molest you there, that Body of Sin and Death shall never enter with you into Life ; the Motions of Sin shall for ever cease in that Eternal Rest. Are you here oppressed with Sorrows ? Do Afflictions overwhelm you ? Why there God shall kiss your blubbered Eyes dry again, and wipe with his own Hands all Tears from your Eyes ? Are you pester'd here with Temptations, and doth the evil

One, without intermission, haunt you with black and hellish Thoughts, with dreadful and horrible Dejections? There you shall be quite beyond the Cast of all his fiery Darts; and instead of these you shall have within you an ever-living Fountain bubling up spiritual and sprightly Contemplations and holy Raptures for ever, such as you never knew when you were here upon Earth, no not when you were in the most spiritual and heavenly Frame. Are you here clouded and cast down with Desertions, and doth God sometimes hide his Face from you in Displeasure? In Heaven there shall be an everlasting Sun-shine, God shall look freely and stedfastly upon you, and you shall no more see him through a *Glaſs* *darkly*, but *Face to Face*, without any interruption or obscurity: *Think O Soul!* (and then think of any Thing else if thou canſt) What is it to see the *Father of Lights* in his own Rays? What is it to see the *Sun of Righteousness* lie in the Bosom of the *Father of Lights*? What is it to feel the eternal Warmth and Influence of the *Holy Ghost* springing from both these Lights? What is it to converse with *Holy Angels and the Spirits of just Men*

Men made perfect, to join with them in singing the same *Hallelujahs* for ever? And when you have thought all this, think once more, Heaven is all this and more also. Well then, since Heaven is such, and since such a Heaven as this is may be yours, what should I say more, but only with the *Apostle?* *Having these Promises,* <sup>2Cor. 7.1.</sup> dearly Beloved, Promises of so certain and vast a Glory as this is, *let us cleanse and purify our selves from all filthiness and pollution both of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the fear of God.* Is this Heaven attainable upon your Working? Will God give it into Wages after working? Will he share Stars, nay, will he share himself and his Christ among you? Truly methinks Christians should not have patience to hear any more, methinks it is too much dulness to indure another Motive besides this: Why do you not interrupt me then? Why do you not cry out, *What shall we do that we may work the Works of God?* Why do you not say and pray, *Lord, work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure?* Why is there not such a holy Tumour and Disturbance among you, some Questioning, some Praying, some Resolving,

ing, all some way or other testifying a sense of Salvation upon you? But, alas, there is a general Silence; Men and Women sit as quiet in their Seats, as if their Seats were filled rather with Monuments than with Men; as if Heaven and eternal Salvation were of no Concernment for them to look after. And wherefore is all this, but because their Sight is short, and their Faith weak? They do not see afar off, nor believe afar off: Heaven they look upon as at a great distance, and very unwilling they are to go so long upon Trust; and sensual Persons, as they are, they look for present Reward and present Wages, and will not stir till they have received it: And this is the Reason why the Consideration of this great and infinite Glory affects Men no more, they look for something present.

Well, be it so. Will God's Work bring in no present Profit? Yes, it will, and that such as you your selves shall acknowledge to be great. And therefore,

The Reward in working for Salvation is great.

2.

*Secondly*, Besides those set Wages that are to be received at the end of our Lives, there are many Vails and occasional

onal Incomes that accrue to God's Servants in the performance of their Work.  
As,

First, Such are assured that God will provide for them while they are doing of his Work; he hath assured them of the Mercies and good Things of this Life by Promise. I do not say of the trou-  
blesome abundance of them, but of the Enjoyment of them so far forth as they are Mercies and good Things. Godli-  
ness, says the Apostle, is profitable for all things, having the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. It hath the Promises of this Life, and that is a large Charter, by virtue whereof God feeds them and cloaths them, and provides Sustenance and comfortable Enjoyments for all those that work in his Service. And therefore that I may note it by the way, most Men are greatly mistaken that labour and toil in the World to get Riches and great Estates, this is not the right thriving Course; if you would grow Rich, First seek the kingdom of Heaven and the Righteousness thereof; work out your own Salvation: Labour for the true Riches, and this will not only increase and im-  
prove

I.  
God will  
provide  
for us  
while we  
are work-  
ing.

1 Tim. 4.8

prove your inward Graces, but increase and improve your outward Mercies also. It is true indeed *Earth Worms* may by carking and caring, by pinching and drudging increase their heap of Dirt; but let who will, for my part I will not nor cannot call that Man a rich Man, that hath more Curses than Enjoyments. Well thus we see what great Vails God gives his Servants ; he gives them not only those of another Life, but those of this Life so far as they are Mercies, and that is one *Vail*.

2. Secondly, *As God provides for his Servants while they are working, so their very Work is Wages and Reward enough for it self.* If God should only give us our Labour for our Pains, as we use to say, and never bestow a Penny more upon us than what we get in his Service, we were even in that sufficiently rewarded. It was certainly a violent Pang of distempered Zeal in that Person, that carried Fire in the one Hand and Water in the other ; and being demanded a Reason of it, his Answer was, He would burn up Paradise and quench Hell-fire, that so God might be served, and Holiness embraced upon no other Motives

Motives than themselves. This was a violent Pang and cannot be allowed; this Fire was strange Fire, and this Water was too much muddied to be Water of the Sanctuary. But yet certainly, that Man, who abstracting from the Consideration of *Heaven* and *Hell*, eternal Rewards and Punishments, would not rather choose the Works of God and the Ways of Holiness, than the Works of Sin and the Ways of Iniquity, let that Man know he never yet had much Acquaintance with that Way and with that Work. What says holy *David* concerning the Commandments of God? *In keeping them there is great Reward*; not only after keeping them, when those Commands that have here been the Rule of our Holiness and Obedience, shall in Heaven become the Measure of our Reward and Happiness; *but in the very keeping of them*, while we are observing and obeying, there is so great a Reward, that we should have no cause to complain, should God bestow no more upon us, than to suffer us to obey his Law. For,

First,

I.  
By work-  
ing for  
Salvation  
we enjoy  
Commu-  
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God.

First, Herein we uphold Communion with God and Christ, through the holy Spirit. What is Communion, but only a mutual Intercourse of Grace and Duty, when Grace received reflects back again in the returns of Duty? Then is Communion maintained between God and the Soul, when we return Duty for Grace. Now is this nothing to enjoy Fellowship and Communion with the great God of Heaven and Earth; to be admitted to him, to walk and converse familiarly with him and to enjoy him, to see him who is invisible, to lean upon him who is Almighty, to enjoy him who is infinite? Is all this nothing? Will not the Souls of those who have by Experience tasted the sweetnes of these Things, cry out, *They are so excellent and transcendent, that there is but one Thing more desirable, and that is immediate Enjoyment?* What is Heaven it self but Communion with God at a nearer Hand? Here it is by Faith, there by Vision; here by Ordinances, there by immediate Influences; here it is by Duty, there by Union. And therefore if the Consideration of a future Heaven be not cogent and prevailing

vailing with you, behold here is a Heaven at present ; here is Happiness for your Work, as well as for your Reward. It was nobly spoken of *Gilleains Carriciolus*, Cursed, says he, *be that Man who preferreth the whole World before one hours Communion with Jesus Christ.* And certainly they who have once tasted the sweetnes of this Communion, will subscribe to that *Anathema.*

Secondly, *There is usually great Peace and Tranquility of Conscience attends and accompanies this working for Salvation;* that fills the Soul with as great a Calm as the World had the first Morning of its Creation, when there was no Wind or Tempest to discompose it. Never is the Soul more at rest than when it is most at work. I dare appeal to the Experience of the People of God in this Case. Doth not your most Solemn Feasts come in by your Obedience? Doth ever Conscience look so friendly and pleasantly upon you as when it finds you active in the Ways of God? It then wears not a Wrinkle or Frown upon its Face; as Sin ruffles it, so Duty smooths it out again; and this causeth such

such Peace and Quietness in the inward Man, as yields more satisfaction than all the noise and ruffling Gallantry and Jollity in the World can. *This is our rejoicing, the Testimony of our Consciences, that in simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Conversation in the World.* So that if Men care not for the Enjoyment of God, yet if they love the Enjoyment of themselves, if they would avoid Discords and Civil Wars in their own Breasts, this were enough to excite them to this pacifying Work, that attones and reconciles Conscience unto themselves.

3.  
In working for  
Salvation  
God gives  
in many  
Testimo-  
nies of  
his Favor.

Thirdly, *In this working for Salvation God gives in many evident Testimonies of his special favour and acceptation unto the Souls of his Servants.* Thou meetest him, says the Prophet, that joyceth and worketh Righteousness. Thou meetest him, how? not to contend with him, as with Jacob; not to slay him, as thou didst Balaam; but to embrace him, to reveal and manifest thy self unto him. If you have any comfortable Evidences that God is yours in a strict Bond of an everlasting and unalterable Covenant, and that you are accepted

accepted of him in the well-beloved : Examine how you attained to this Evidence ; Was it not through Obedience and Working ? This is the way whereby God manifests himself unto the Souls of his ; and should your comfortable Persuasions not come in thus by *Obedience* and *Working* ? They are but *Enthusiastical* and groundless Presumptions, and not true and divine Assurance. The *Apostle* in *Pet. 2.* exhorts us, *To make our Calling and Election sure :* But how is that to be done ? Why it is *by giving diligence*. What is it Men desire and wish for next to Heaven ? Is it not Assurance of it ? Would you not have the Terrors and Torments of Conscience apprehending and pre-occupating your own Condemnation , eased and removed ? Would you not have the unquiet tossings and fluctuations of your Minds , because of the uncertainty of your future State and Condition, settled and confirmed ? Why then be persuaded to Work ; believe it, this Evidence is never received in any other way than in a way of Duty : God will not hold his Light of Assurance to them who will not work the Works of Obedience.

4.  
Obedience  
accompa-  
nied with  
Joy.

Fourthly, Those that are diligent in working for Salvation, many times have high Spring-tides of Joy. Joy that is unspeakable and glorious, that rusheth in upon the Soul and ravisheth it with a sweet and potent Delight, while it is in ways of Obedience. Now this, tho' it be not ordinary with every Christian, yet God sometimes vouchsafes it, especially to the most laborious working Christians, as a Cordial to revive and quicken them that they should not faint and grow weary in their Work. He gives them many times such prelibations of future Glory, such bright Glimpses of himself passing before them, that they scarce know wherein their state differs from the state of the Glorified, unless it be that it is shorter in the duration, lasting not so long as theirs. Well then, should you be asked as they were in the Parable, *Why stand you here idle all the day long?* You could not return the same Answer as they did, *be-cause no Man hath hired us*; for God hath hired you, and that at no less a rate than all these great and glorious Things that have been propounded to you do amount unto: A glorious Heaven,  
*blef*

blessed Work that is accompanied with Communion with God, Peace of Conscience, Assurance of divine Favour and Joy in the *Holy Ghost*; and if all this will not persuade you, certainly you set a mighty price upon your own Sloth; only let me say this, beware that these Souls of yours that you will not part with to God for Salvation, beware you do not sell them to the Devil for nothing.

*Thirdly*, Consider your Incouagements after your Work is done, there is an eternal Rest that waits you. I have already consider'd Heaven as a Reward for working, let us now consider it as a Rest after working. And so the Apostle tells us *there remains a Rest for the People of God*. And in Rev. 14. we read, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, jea saith the Spirit for they rest from their Labours and their Works do follow them.* They rest from their Labours.

3.  
There is  
an eternal  
Rest after  
working.

Heb. 4. 9.

*First, They rest from their Labour in working under Affliction.* Sometimes Afflictions are Spurs and Incentives, and sometimes they are Burthens and Dis-

i.  
No Affi-  
ction in  
Heaven.

couragements to Obedience. But when we arrive at Heaven we shall no longer need the Spur to quicken us, nor shall we any longer bare that Burthen to oppres us, but cast it down at Heavens Gate, where never Sorrow nor Suffering durst yet appear. And,

2. *No Deser-tion in Heaven.* Secondly, *In Heaven you shall rest from your Labour in working under Deser-tion.* Now though you do work, yet it may be you apprehend God frowning upon you, and finding fault with all that you do. Now it may be though God doth cause the clear Light of his Precepts and Spirit to shine before you to direct you what your Work is that you should do, yet he makes it dismal Darkness behind you, and shuts up the Light of his Comfort that you cannot see what Work you have done; and this is your great Trouble, you work and labour, and yet you know not whether you shall be accepted. Obedience were easy and pleasant Work, *says the Soul*, if I knew that God did regard me; but alas! I pray, and he shuts out my Prayer from him; I lay hold upon him, *but he shakes me off in displeasure*; *I obey, but he rejects all my Ser-*

Services ; and this is the Anguish and Torture of my Life. This indeed is Matter of great Grief and Trouble. But know, Oh Soul ! thou shalt not long work thus in the dark, shortly thou shalt be above these Clouds , and then thou shalt see that those Prayers that thou thought'ſt were vainly scatter'd and lost in the Air , are become a Cloud of sweet Incenſe hovering before the Throne of God. And those Tears that thou thought'ſt were dropt in vain upon the Earth, are all gathered up and preserved in God's Bottle. And those poor Duties of thine , that for their own meanness and vileness thou thought'ſt God would scorn, yet thro' that worth that is put upon them by the Intercession of Christ, are ranked in the same degree of Acceptation as the most perfect Services of the Angels themselves are. Have but patience a while and continue working and thou shalt see a happy Issue, when the Clouds of Darkness and Deserſion, that now lie upon thy Spirit , shall be all scattered and blown away.

3. Thirdly, You shall also rest from your Labour in working against the continual Workings of your own Corruptions ; which shall then at once both cease to act and cease to be : And this indeed is the great Thing that makes it such a blessed Rest to the People of God. Indeed God cuts you out your Work in his Commands, but it is the old Man within you that makes it to be tedious, irksome and difficult unto you ; God makes it not so, but your Corruption makes it so ; and this it doth two ways : *First*, By deadning your Heart to it : And *Secondly*, By turning your Heart against it. Deadness and dulness to and averseness from the ways of holy Obedience, are the greatest cause of all that Toil and Pains that most take in the Work and Service of God, if ever they will bring it to a good issue. Now both these shall shortly cease and be removed, if you but wait and continue striving against them.

I.  
In Heaven First, You shall rest from all that Labour there is that you take with a dead and heavy Heart Rest from in the ways of God. Now you are continually labouring with a dead heart in the ways of God.

ging of it to get it a little more forward, lifting of it up to get it a little higher towards God and Heaven. Now you stand in need of continual quickning Grace to actuate and excite those Lumps of Lead that lie heavy within your Breasts ; and it is the greatest disquietment of your Lives that you find your Hearts so heartles and listless to what is holy and spiritual. It is with them as with some great Bells, that you must pull long at the Rope before you can make them sound. Is not this the daily Complaint of God's Children , that their Hearts are dull and heavy and they cannot raise them ? and this makes the ways of Obedience , yea , this makes their very Lives become burthensome. Well, have but patience for a while, and continue still to struggle against this sad Indisposition, and it will not be long before you shall rest from this Labour also. Though now you are as *Birds* whose Bodies are too heavy for their Wings , when you stretch them forth and would fain be soaring up to Heaven, you can only run up and down and flutter upon the Earth ; yet shortly these heavy and cloggy Bodies shall fall off and you shall be all Wing, free from

all Deadness and Straitness, Distraction and Weariness in the Ways of God that now afflict you : Then shall your Affections be always intent and not languish, always burning and yet never waste nor consume ; every Motion of your Soul shall then shoot themselves to God as quick as the Lightning, and yet constant as the Sun-beams. And those who are now out-stript by weak and underling Christians, shall then be able to keep pace in their Obedience, even with the *Holy Angels* themselves.

2. And then Secondly, *In Heaven there shall be a resting from all that Labour that there shall be a rest.* the People of God now take in the ways of holy Obedience, through the averseness of their Hearts from them, and the opposition of their Hearts against them. There is that contradiction in the carnal part against what is holy and spiritual, that the Godly cannot bring themselves to the performance of it without much Strife and Contention, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit* ; and when the spiritual part calleth for holy Thoughts and heavenly Affections, the corrupt and fleshy part sends forth noisome and stinking Vapours, obstructing the Good that

that we would do, and infecting that little Good that we do perform : So that as if working were not a sufficient Im- ployment, a Christian must Fight that he may Work ; and this is it that makes working for Salvation so laborious, because we must Fight and Work at once. But it shall not be long before that which hinders shall be removed, and then as you are not under a sad necessity of offending God , so also you shall be under a most blessed necessity of serving God , and shall find no more trouble in that Service, than in those Actions which you now cannot but do. And thus shall you have a happy Rest from all that Labour and Pains that your Corruptions here made you take. And therefore be encouraged to perse- vere in well-doing, perfect the Work you have undertaken in spight of all op- position from your own corrupt Hearts, for assure your selves this troublesome Inmate shall not long disquiet you. I might also add,

Fourthly, You shall then rest from your Labour in working against Satan's Tem- ptations ; who is now buffeting of you while you are here upon Earth, but in <sup>4.</sup> Saints in Heaven are free from Sa-Heaven tions.

Heaven the evil One shall not approach near to touch you. There you shall no more trouble your selves to know how to distinguish between the *Injections* of *Satan* and the *Ebolitions* of your own Corruptions, for you shall know neither there ; you shall then stand no more upon your own Guard and keep Centinel to your own Soul , nor conflict with any of *Satan's* Temptations, but shall forever triumph in Victories and Conquests over them.

This is that blessed *Rest* that you shall shortly possess if you will but now Work. And what is it that comforts the *painful Labourer* but this, that tho' his Work be hard and difficult, yet the Evening will soon shut in, and he shall then betake himself to quiet Rest and Repose ? What is it that comforts the *wearisome Traveller*, but this ? Every Step of his long Way brings him nearer to his Home, where he shall enjoy a longer Rest : And shall not the same encourage and support you in your Way and Work ? What though the Work be painful and laborious? yet it will not be long before you shall lie down in the Bed of the Grave , and sweetly sleep away

away a short Night of Oblivion that is between this and the *Resurrection*, and your tired weary Souls shall then re-pose and nestle themselves in the warm Bosom of God himself. What though the Way be long and tedious to the Flesh? yet you are Travelling to your Father's House, where you are sure to be welcome, and where you shall enjoy an Eternity of Rest and Repose, and shall sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and the whole Ring of glorious *Saints*, discoursing to them of the Dangers and Difficulties that you have passed through in getting to them. Doth it not sweeten the Toil and Pains that you take in your *Touth*, to think that thereby you are laying up that where-upon you may live at Ease hereafter, and spare the weakness of *old Age*? And is it not much more Rational that while you are in this World, which may be called the *Touth of Eternity*, you should lay up a good Foundation and treasure up a large, rich Stock, upon which you might live at Ease for *ever*? Why should you not be as wise and politick for Heaven, as for a little of the perish-ing Things of this World? Will you Labour that you may Rest here, where your

your Rest shall certainly be disquieted and you shook out of it ; and will you not labour that you may Rest in Heaven, where alone you can enjoy an everlasting Rest ? I know it is that inveterate prejudice that Men have taken up against the Ways of God, that they are painful and laborious, and this invalidates all Reasons and Arguments that we bring them to persuade them to work. Rest , that is it they would have ; and though God tells them they shall have an *Eternal Rest* if they will but work a while ; and tells them on the other Hand, *that they shall never enter into Rest* , if they do not work, that they shall never enjoy more Ease than what they can find in Hell it self, where their Groans and Bellowings, together with the Smoak of that bottomless Pit shall ascend up for ever ; yet such is the madness of Mens *Folly*, that neither the *Rest of Heaven*, nor the *Restlessness of Hell*, can stir or move them, but they roll themselves up in their own Sloth and will hear nothing, nor lay any thing to Heart that may rouze or awaken them. Hath not God often called upon them by his Ministers ? *Sinners, Sinners, awake, bestir your selves, Hell-fire*

is kindling about you, God is ready to open his Mouth to pronounce Sentence against you, *Satan* is ready to lay hold of you and to drag you to be tormented. One would think such Execrations as these are, should awaken the *Carkasses* that you set over, were they not in their final state; and yet with you whose Souls are yet in their Bodies, but know not how soon they may be in *Hell*, who among you are moved with all that hath or can be said of this Matter? nay, are you not like sleepy Men when jogged, ready to grow pettish and to quarrel with us? Why do you molest us? Why do you envy us our Rest? Why do you disturb our Peace, and will not let us alone? Shall I say to you now, as once our Saviour said to his Disciples? *Sleep on, and take your Rest*; sleep on, and nod <sup>Luke 21.</sup> <sub>40.</sub> your selves into Destruction; sleep on, and never wake more till the Flames of Hell awaken you. Truly we come not to disturb your Rest, but we come to inform and guide you to a better Rest than what you can find here, even an eternal Rest, a Rest with him that is immortal, a Rest with him who alone is unchangeable; and is not this Rest worth a little Pains and Strugling to obtain?

obtain? Do you think you are always to believe and to repent, always to obey and mortifie your Corruptions? You cannot think so, unless you think you are always to live in this World: No, there is a Rest remains for the People of God, after a few short Days be gone. It is not therefore your Ease that you seek when you will not work; no, it is rather your Pain and eternal Torment, which shall certainly then be given unto all slothful Persons; when the industrious and painful Christian, that labours and works for Salvation, shall be admitted into the Eternal Rest that he is aspiring after, and hath already embraced in his Hope and Faith.

4. *Fourthly, Consider, As in Heaven in Heaven there is an eternal Rest, so also in Heaven there is an eternal Work to be done:* And therefore you should inure your selves to that Work while you are here upon Earth. If Happiness, according to the Philosophers Notion, consists in Operation, then in Heaven where there is the most perfect Happiness, there must needs be the most perfect Operation. And therefore, whatever hath been spoken

spoken of Rest that remains, yet you are not so to conceive of it as possibly some gross enough are apt to wish and fancy to themselves, as if in Heaven the blessed were unactive and enjoyed there only a long Vacation, and only stretched themselves on that Flowery Bank, and so void of Cares and Fears lull'd away an Eternity : No, these are too low and bruitish Apprehensions for the Glory of that Place. That Rest that is there to be expected and enjoyed is *operative working Rest*; it is both Rest and Exercise at once, and therefore it is a true *Paradox*; though the Saints in Heaven rest from their Labours, yet they never rest from their Working; continually are they blessing and praising of God, *Ascribing Glory, and Honour and Power to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore*: Always are they beholding, admiring and adoring of God, and burning in Love to each other, and mutually rejoicing in God and in one another: And this is the Work of that Eternal Rest, a Work never to be intermitted nor to cease. And therefore it is worth our observing, that both those Places that do chiefly speak of the future Rest of the People of God,

God, do also intimate a Work in that Rest. So the *Apostle to the Hebrews* tells **Heb. 4. 9.** us, *There remains a Rest for the People of God*; the Word is, *There remains a Sabbath for the People of God*. Look now you are to be employed on a *Sabbath*, such shall be your Employment in your *Eternal Rest*. Is it not your Work now upon a *Sabbath-day* to raise your Thoughts and Affections to Heaven, to fix and terminate them upon God, to maintain Communion with him, to admire him in all his Works both of Grace and Providence, to stir up your own Hearts, and to quicken the Hearts of others to praise and adore him? Why this shall be the Work of your *Eternal Sabbath*. And when you are at any time lifted up to a more than ordinary Spiritualness in these Things, then may you give some guess what your Work shall be in Heaven, and what the frame of your Hearts shall be in your eternal Rest. And so that other place in the *Revelations*, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them*. Which may be meant not only of the Reward of their Works that they shall then receive, but of the Works them-

themselves that here they performed on Earth ; these shall follow them and enter into Heaven with them ; and as they were done by them weakly and imperfectly here , so there the very same Works shall be done by them with absolute and consummate Perfection ; all those Works I mean that for the Matter and Substance of them do not connote a sinful State and Condition . Now then , since you must be employ'd in such a Work as this is to Eternity , why do you not accustom your selves to it while you are here ? The *Apostle to the Colossians , Blesseth God who had made them* Col. 1.12. *meet to be made Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light .* Were it a meet thing that those that spend their whole time in Sin , should be abruptly snatched up into Heaven , to spend an Eternity there in Holiness ? And therefore God accustoms those whom he saves in an ordinary way and manner , to work those Works here on Earth that they are to be employed in hereafter in Heaven ; here they are *Apprentices* as it were that they may learn the *Trade* of Holiness , that when that time comes they may become fit *Citizens of the New Jerusalem* ; here

God is trying their Eyes with more qualified and allayed Discoveries of himself that when they come to view him Face to Face, they may be able to bear the exceeding Brightness of his Glory. And therefore though you profess Heaven to be your Country, and *that you are Strangers and Pilgrims here on Earth*; *Psal. 137.* yet say not with the Captive Jews, *How shall we sing the Song of Sion in a strange Land?* Yes, you must accustom yourselves to that *Song*, you must mould and warble it here on Earth, that you may be perfect in it when you come to join with *Saints and Angels* in their eternal *Hallelujahs*. You must try your Eyes by seeing of God, and your Voices by singing that *Song* that you must continually sing in *Heaven*. And were it only for this disposing and fitting of your selves for the Work of Heaven, this were Motive enough to persuade to begin it now.

5. Fifthly, *Another encouraging Consideration to persuade you to work out your own Salvation, is this; as your Work is great, so the Helps and Assistances that God gives for the performance of this Work are many: So that your Work is not greater than*

than your Aids are, nor is it more difficult than they are potent. And therefore though you are weak in your selves, and so weak that were you left to your own Strength you would faint in the most easy Service, yea, the weight but of one holy Thought would sink you, for *we are not sufficient*, says the Apostle, *as of our selves to think any good thing*: Yet when we consider those mighty *Auxiliaries* that are afforded and promised, as Comfort when we Droop, Support when we are Weak, that we shall Rise when we Fall, Recruits when we are Worfed, Omnipotency to supply our Impotency, All-sufficiency to make up our Defects: When we consider these Things, then may we triumphantly say with the Apostle, *When we are Weak, then are we Strong*; and tho' of our selves we are nothing, and therefore can do nothing, yet through these mighty Assitances we are able to do all Things. Now I shall rank these *Auxiliary Forces* into Two Bands. Some are External, others are Internal. External Helps are various: I shall only instance in Three.

I. First, You have the exciting Examples of others, who have already happily gone through this Work. You are not commanded that which never yet was imposed upon any of the Sons of Men, nor that whoever undertook failed in the performance, and sunk under the burthen of it: No, there are Hundreds and Thousands gone before you, from whom God required as much as he doth from you, and these have demonstrated that the Work is possible, and the Reward certain. And therefore as *Israel* followed the *Cloud* for their Conduct into the *Land of Canaan*: So may you be led into a *Land* of better *Promise* by a *Cloud of Witnesses* of those, who have already passed through the same Faith, Patience and Obedience, wherein you are to follow them. It is *Superstition* heightned to *Idolatry*, to make use of the departed *Saints* as substituted *Mediators* and under *Advocates* unto Christ, that Christ may be our *Advocate* unto God the Father; what their present *Prayers* for us are we know not, but this we are certain of, their past *Example* ought to be propounded and improved by us for our Incouragement in the way.

of Holiness and Obedience. Hence the Apostle exhorts us that we *should be diligent, not slothful*; and he grounds it upon this, *because in so doing, we should be followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*. In difficult and hazardous Enterprizes, every Man is apt to stand still and see who will lead the way, and according to the Success of the first Attempters, so either to be encouraged or dismayed. Now what says our Saviour, *Mat. 11.12. The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*. You are not the forlorn Hope, you are not the first Affailors, no, whole Armies of Saints have in former Ages storm'd Heaven; they have heretofore planted strong Batteries against it, and made wide Breaches in it; they have heretofore entred and taken possession; and still the passage is as open for you, and the Conquest as easie as for them; and you may see them beckoning out of Heaven to you, and hear them calling to you, *Fellow Soldiers, bend your Force hither, there is your Labour, here is your Rest; there are your Enemies, here is your Crown and Victory; believe it, there are no more Dangers for*

you to pass through, no more Difficulties for you to meet with than what we have passed through, yea, and passed with so much safety as not so much as one Soul of us miscarried, not a Soul left dead on the place; we strugled against the same Corruptions that you do, and overcame them; against the same Temptations, and baffled them; against the same Devils, and routed them; against the same Flatteries, and Oppositions of a base World and despised them: Believe it upon our Experience, all these Things are but Scare-Crows set in the ways of Obedience on purpose to affright you, but there is no danger at all in them unless you fear them; this they tell you with one consent: And therefore if *Examples* are any Incouragement, as indeed they are almost the greatest; if Imitation hath any force to Obedience, as too often we find it hath great force to sin; why should we not hereby quicken our selves? Why do you not arise and press upon the Footsteps of them who have gone before you, and shew'd you that the way is both certain and passable? Are you called to exercise *Self-denial*? *Abraham* looks down from Heaven upon

upon you, and tells you that he was ready to sacrifice his beloved *Isaac*. Are you afraid of the Scoffs and Jears of a flearing World? Why *Noah* builded an Ark; *Moses* relinquish'd the Honours of *Pharoah's* Court, and met with as many Persecutions and Afflictions, and underwent as many Taunts and Flouts as you are like to do. Are you called to lay down your Lives for the Testimony of *Jesuſ* and a good Conscience? Why *Stephen* tells you a Storm of Stones fell upon him, and brake open the Prison, and set the Prisoner free; his Soul escaped, that broke out of the Cage, and as a Bird took Wing and flew to Heaven. Are you assaulted with Temptations? St. *Paul* looks down and tells you that he had much stronger Temptations than you have, and yet he got safe to Heaven? Yea, our great Master and Pattern *Jesuſ Christ* wrought out all Obedience; and what were the Motives that put him upon this mighty Undertaking? It was not for his own Salvation and Happiness, but it was for ours: Nay, the Scripture goes yet lower, it was, *To lead us an Example that we* <sup>1</sup> *Pet. 2.* *should follow his Steps.* Now shall <sup>21.</sup> Christ do all this, not for himself, but

for us, and shall we sit still and do nothing for our selves? Shall Christ take so much Pains to set us an Example, and shall not we follow that Example? We who have so great a Happiness to work for, and so a great a Pattern to work by? Shall we be slothful in procuring our own Good, since Christ was so laborious and expensive, not in procuring Good to himself, but in procuring Good for others? Methinks these Things should add some Spurs to our Endeavours, and excite us to follow the Examples of those that are gone before us, yea, and to leave an Example unto them that are to come after us; and though we do come after the Examples of others who are gone before us, yet the consideration of their Examples who have gone through this Work, may excite us not to come behind them in any good Work.

2. Secondly, God holds out to us the Light of his Gospel-Truth and Ordinances, whereby to help us in our Work. What Christ faith of himself is applicable unto all, We must work the Works of God while it is Day; the Night cometh wherein no Man can work. You are not shut up in John 9. 4. Dark.

Darkness, you are not muffled up in the Clouds of Error and Ignorance; or if you are, it is not because you have not Light shining about you, but because you shut it out when it is breaking in upon you. It is not a double Labour that is put upon you, first to find out your Duty, and then to perform it; no, the Light shines about you, and unless you will seal up your Eyes against it, it is impossible but that it will sometime flash in upon you, and discover both what you have mis-done, and what you ought to do. The *Mahometans* have a *Tradition* among them, That *Moses Law* and *Christ's Gospel* were written at first with Ink made of pure Light: This Conceit of theirs, though it be fond and ridiculous, yet it carries a mystick Truth in it; the Scripture is as plain for matter of Duty, as if it had been written with a *Sun-beam*. Ordinances are dispensed freely and powerfully, so great a throng of Teachers and such variety of Gospel-Administrations, that Men must take almost as much Pains to keep themselves ignorant of their Duty, as would suffice to perform their Duty. And wherefore think you is all this glorious Light given you? Is it not that  
you

you might work by it? Doth a Master light up a Torch or Candle only that his Servants might play about it? And wherefore doth God light up the *Sun of Truth* in the *Firmament* of his *Church*? Is it only that you should dally and trifle with it? No, it shines that you may work by it, and truly work by it you do; but alas! how many do work the Works of Darkness by the glorious Light of Truth? How many have Light enough to see that they are notoriously wicked and profane Swearers, Drunkards, Despisers of Ordinances, Revilers at Religion and the Professors of it, Enemies to what is sober and sacred in Christianity? This Light they have flashing in their Faces from the clear Evidence of the word of God, and yet still they continue to work the Works of Darkness. What shall I say to such as these are? Truly I can say nothing worse to them than what their own Consciences already thunder against them, for they are self-condemned Persons. But truly this Complaint may too too justly be taken up against all that do not walk worthy of the Light youchfased to them; their Sins are revealed clearly, and Duties are revealed

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as clearly as the *Scripture* can possibly express them , and yet they live in a gross neglect of them. Well, believe it, this Light will not always shine to be gazed at only ; the Day is drawing to an end , the Night is hastning upon us, the darkness of the Night of Death, and the darker Night of Judgment ; and oh ! that then it may not be any of our Condemnations, *That Light is come into the World, but we loved Darkness and the Works of Darkness better than Light, because our Deeds were evil.*

Thirdly, *God hath to this end set apart his Ministers, that they might be Helpers to you in this great Work of working out of your Salvation.* And therefore they are called, *Helpers of your Faith and Joy.* 2Cor.1.24 They are said, *To watch for your Souls as those that must give an account.* They are said to be *Co-workers with Jesus* Heb.13.17 *Christ;* yea, they are said *To save your Souls.* Ministers are set in the Church to admonish with all Meekness, to beseech with all Earnestnes, to rebuke with all Authority, yea, and we have done it : Have we not called upon you, *Sinners, Sinners, why will you die?* The Way wherein you now walk leads down

down to the Chambers of Death and Destruction ; the Wages of that Work you are now doing is Shame, Death and Hell : Have we not thus often call'd upon you ? Yes, so often have we thundred Terrors in Mens Ears, that they now disregard them out of custom ; and when we speak of Sin and Death, and Hell and Judgment to come, Men think we are fallen into a common Peace, and we must talk dreadfully to keep in our Road. These are the Apprehensions Men have of the great and fearful Denunciations that are daily discharged in their Ears by the Ministers of the Gospel. And have we not also display'd Jesus Christ in all his Excellencies, so far forth as his infinite Excellencies can be display'd with a few short-breath'd Words ? Have we not set forth Holiness in its Beauty and Lustre, and done as much as we could do to reconcile you to the ways of Obedience, and to remove the unjust Prejudices that Men have taken up against them ? What could we have done more than we have done, to inform Mens Judgments, to satisfie their Consciences, to answer all their Doubts, to allay their Fears, to supply them with quickning

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Considerations to Duty, and with deterring Considerations from Sin ? We appeal to your selves ; and yet we speak not this to ingratiate or to commend our selves (we profess we care not much for the good Opinion of any Man in the World, farther than it may be of some advantage to do your Souls good;) but do you think God expects not some great Thing from you ? Give me leave to deal truly and faithfully with you ; if your Works do not in some measure answer the Labours of God's Servants that have many Years follow'd you with Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little, still warning and intreating with all Bowels of Tenderness, alluring you to pity your own Souls, and to save your selves from that Wrath and Vengeance that shall shortly overcome the disobedient World ; They who have thus exhorted you, believe it, shall within a while be Witnesses against you. Well then , since you are daily called upon and warned to flee from Wrath to come ; since you have such clear Convictions of your Duty that a bribed Conscience can hardly evade ; since you have such abundance of Examples  
of

of others who have gone before you, and have done what God requires of you ; why will not you be hereby persuaded and encouraged to work ? These Things you must acknowledge are great Helps to further your Salvation ; and, believe it, they will prove dreadful Aggravations of your Condemnations, if they do not prevail with you. But these are only outward Helps.

2.  
Inward  
Helps.

*Secondly*, There are other Helps, and they are inward, and of far greater Force and Efficacy , of which I shall name Two.

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ence.

First, *The Dictates of your own Consciences* , they are still prompting and exciting of you to work. Conscience it is God's Deputy, and Vicegerent in the Soul, that rules and governs in his Name and by his Authority. Now of all the Faculties in Man this was the least corrupted by his Fall; though the Will be wholly corrupted and perverse that it will not obey the Commands of Conscience , yet Conscience still continues the performance of its Office, still it informs, and urgeth, and threatens, and tormenteth ; and thus may you see it busily

busily working even in those that never had the Law of God to direct Conscience. The Gentiles, says the Apostle to the Romans, that have not the Law, do by Nature, that is, by natural Conscience, the things contained in the Law, their Consciences bearing witness, and their Thoughts, in the mean while, accusing and excusing one another. And because they had not the Law, therefore Conscience in them was like an Officer walking in the Dark, apprehending the Innocent and letting the Guilty escape: But yet this was from the beginning so deeply implanted in the Heart of Man, that something must be done and avoided for to obtain Happiness, which could never yet be obliterated. Tho' our knowledge of what is Duty and what is Sin be in a great part defaced, yet this knowledg the Scripture doth abundantly supply to us, and gives Conscience a perfect Draught of all the Duties that God requires, and bids it be Overseer and look that the Work be done. How? is it not a great Help when you have somewhat within you that stands for, and takes part with what is Good and what is your Duty? Conscience secretly bids you beware of such and such

Rom. 2.  
14, 15.

such Sins that will bring Ruin, Destruction and Vengeance upon you, and perform such and such Duties, Pray, Hear, Meditate, and be more fervent and affectionate in all your Services; this is the way that tends to Life and Happiness. Thus Conscience daily and hourly is following of you, with Counsels and Chidings, and with Threatnings, denouncing Wrath and Vengeance against you; and though it speaketh these Things with so low a Voice that others, though they lay their Ears to your Soul cannot hear it, yet in your Ears it speaks as loud as Thunder, and no less terrible; it is in vain to wound it, it is in vain to stop its Mouth, for that will but make it break out with the more violence and out-rage; nothing can appease it but Duty and Work. Why should you not then, since you have that within you that stands for and prompts you to work, why should you not as well follow and obey the Dictates and Commands of your Consciences that prompt you to Work and Duty, as obey the Propensions of your sensual part to the contrary.

Secondly,

Secondly, God himself helps us by working all our Works in us and for us ; by God himself helping a Christian working in us the will to work, and by working for us the work when we have willed : to work.

And therefore while there is no part of our Work too hard for God, there should be no part of it too hard and difficult for us. Christ tells us, *His burden is not heavy*, yet were it heavy we might well undergo it, since he himself helps us to bear it. The frequent experience of every Child of God doth abundantly confirm this : Did you never begin a Duty with your Hearts listless and dead, with Affections cold and flat, with Thoughts very wandering and distracting, that at the very entrance of it you concluded you should never make good Work of it, you should never bring the Duty to a good Issue ? And yet have you not in the midst of these your Distempers found a mighty assistance and influence shining down from Heaven into your Hearts, filling them with holy and divine Affections, transporting them beyond all that deadness that did oppres them, enlarging them with sweet and heavenly Enlargements, so that no Duties were ended

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with more Comfort and Revivings than those that were begun with such dead Hearts and cold Affections? Have you not often found it so? And what is this but a sensible feeling of Gods working in you, that in the same performance you see your own weakness when you are left to your selves, and you see the Power of Gods Assistance when he comes in to help you, and there is no Duty but this divine Assistance may be hoped for and expected by you to enable you in the performance of it? Are you

*Isa. 43. 2.* to do? God works in you the Will and the Deed. Are you to suffer? When you pass through the Fire and through the Water he will be with you; he will deliver you in six Troubles, and in seven there shall no Evil touch you. Are you to pray? His Spirit

*Job 5. 19.*

*Rom. 3. 26.* maketh Intercession for us. God doth not as the Scribes and Pharisees did, lay heavy Burthens upon others and not touch them with the least of his Fingers, no, he is pleased to become a Co-worker with you, he begins, he carries on, and he also perfects whatever concerns your Duty here and your Happiness hereafter; and is not this a mighty Encouragement to Obedience? Will you any longer delay since God affords you such

such Assistance as this? Why do you not presently attempt this Work? But you will say, how shall I know that God will assist me? Why put it to the Trial. Was it ever known that God ever failed any that resolutely ventured? Dispute not concurrence, but believe, and by looking for it and depending upon it, you ingage God to help you. It was the consideration of the all-sufficient Assistance of God that made one of the *Ancients* cry out, *Da Domine quod jubes, & jube quod vis: Give, Lord, what thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt.*

Sixthly, Consider for your Incouragement, it is not so much the absolute and legal perfection of the Work, as the perfection of the Worker; that is, the perfection of the Heart that is looked at and rewarded by God: And is not this a great Incouragement? There is a twofold perfection; the perfection of the Work, and the perfection of the Workman: The perfection of the Work is when the Work doth so exactly and strictly answer the holy Law of God, that there is no irregularity in it. The perfection of the Workman is nothing but

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inward Sincerity, the uprightness of the Heart towards God, which may be where there are many Imperfections and Defects intermingled. If God should accept and reward no Work but what is absolutely perfect in respect of the Law, this would be such a sadning Discouragement that it would take off the Wheels of all Endeavours, for all our Obedience falls far short of legal perfection in this Life. We our selves are conscious of many failings and imperfections in our best Services, and God knows far more; and since we can do nothing without Infirmities, who would venture to do any thing upon the account of those Infirmities, lest God should cast back all again as Dung into our Faces? No, but we do not stand upon such Terms as these are with our God, it is not so much what our Works are, as what our Heart is that God looks at and will reward: Yet know also, lest any should too soon lay hold on this; if our Hearts are perfect and sincere, we shall endeavour to the utmost of our Power that our Works may be perfect according to the strictness of the Law. I speak not this therefore to encourage ignorant fottish

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Sinners, that though they live in a constant course of Sin and neglect of Duty, yet sooth up themselves with this, God knows their Hearts are good, sincere and upright. Let me cut off the foolish Hopes of these Men in a Word: It is impossible the Heart should be sincere where there is the allowance and liking of any one sin in the Life. But I speak what I have said to those who upon the sight and sense of their many Failings, of the deadness and untowardness of their Hearts, of their averseness and indisposition, of their wandrings and formality in the performance of what is holy and good, upon the sense of these things are ready to be dejected and discouraged, and to give over doing of any thing, because they can do nothing well: Let such know, though their Works have not this legal Perfection, yet if they do proceed from a sincere upright perfect Heart, they shall be accepted and rewarded by God. *Hezekiah* had his Failings, and the Prophet sharply reproves him for his Pride, &c. making a glorious and boasting Osten-tation of his Treasure to the King of Babylon, yet he prays and appeals to God, *Remember, O Lord, how I have*

*Isa. 38. 3.* *walked before thee in Truth and with a perfect Heart.* There may therefore be a perfect Heart, where there are imperfect Works; and if you can make this Plea, let me tell you the perfection of your Hearts will swallow up the imperfections of your Works, that they shall never come up in remembrance against you before God.

7. Success in working for Salvation is certain.

*Seventhly and Lastly, Consider for your Encouragement though your Work be great, yet the success of it is certain.* The greatest check to Industry is fear of Disappointment, from which you have no security while you labour for any thing besides your own Salvation. All Worldly Affairs are moved by such invisible Wyers and turned upon such small Pins, that if the Finger of Providence displace but one of them, the whole Fabrick of our Design is thereby disordered and our Hopes defeated; and God sometimes delights to frustrate Mens Attempts about Worldly Concernments. *It is not of the Lord of Hosts, says the Prophet, that the People labour in the Fire, and that the People weary themselves for very vanity.* To labour in the Fire signifies two Things;

*Hab. 2. 13.*

*First,*

First, Great Pains. Secondly, Great Disappointment. They work in the midst of scorching Flames, and what they do produce with so much Anguish, they enjoy it not but it consumes betwixt their Fingers. When Men have weaved a curious Web of earthly Contrivances, and think to wrap up themselves therein and to keep them warm, God breathes secret Flames into it that singe it, that it can no more hold together than so much Tinder. And wherefore doth God blast Mens Endeavours, but that seeing the vanity of all their Labour under the Sun, how wavering, how uncertain, and how unsuccessful Things are, how Means run one way, and the End another, they might hereby be induced to turn their Labours into another Channel, and to work for their Souls and for eternal Happiness and Salvation, that are as far above the reach of Disappointment, as they are far above the rate of earthly Concernments. *Mine Elect,* says God, Isa. 52.22. *full long enjoy the Work of their Hands,* they shall not labour in vain. And this is the great Argument urged by the Apostle upon the *Corinthians,* Be stedfast, <sup>2 Cor. 15.</sup> *unmoveable, always abounding in the Work* <sup>58.</sup>

*of the Lord*; and why so industrious and constant? knowing this, says he, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord. Two Things there are that make a Labour to be in vain.

*First*, When it doth not accomplish its End.

*Secondly*, When that End it doth accomplish is not worth the Cost and Pains. Now in neither of these respects is your Labour in vain. For,

*First*, It shall not fail to accomplish the end to which it is ordained, and that is eternal Salvation. Three Things there are that make Men come short in the accomplishment of an End propounded.

*First*, When Men propound to themselves Ends that are in themselves simply impossible.

*Secondly*, When though the End be possible, yet the Means that are used are unfit and improbable.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, When though the Means are rightly suited to the attainment of the end, yet we do not persevere in the use of them. Now none of these ways shall a laborious Christian fail of his end. For,

*First, The End that you work for is not in it self simply impossible.* Should you propound to your selves to become *Angels*; should you strive to sublimate your selves into *spiritual Essences*, your attempts herein were all but vain, because it is impossible you should ever be refined into *Angels*. But if your end be to be *like Angels*, to be *equal to Angels*, this is possible and may be attained.

*When they arise from the dead, they are as the Angels that are in Heaven,* which <sup>Mark 12.</sup> <sup>25.</sup>

*another Evangelist renders, they are equal to the Angels.* If in this Life you pro-

<sup>36.</sup> pose to your selves a state of perfection and freedom both from Sin and Sorrow, a state of consummate Bliss and Happiness, this End is impossible. But if you make it your End to enjoy such a state as this is hereafter, this is attainable and Labour may atchieve it; yea, aim at what degree of Glory you please,

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next below God and Christ, be it as high as *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, I cannot say you think of an impossibility; your Labour may raise you to such a pitch and advance you to such Glory, as shall dazzle the *Sun* in its brightness. It is true, there was once a time when Salvation might well be reckoned among those Things that were impossible; and that was in that sad interval between the *Fall* and the *Promise* of Christ, when all Mankind lay in the shadow and in the valley of Death; under the Breach and yet under the Bond of the Covenant of Works when it had indeed been in vain so much as once to have thought of Happiness, or to have laboured for it: But since Christ's undertaking, *We who were once without Hope, have now obtained good Hope through Grace*; the Partition-Wall that then we could neither climb over nor break through, *is now taken away*; the Gate of Heaven is now set open, and with striving we may enter, for our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light through the *Gospel*. And therefore though it may seem an impossibility to dejected and despairing Souls that ever

ever such vile Wretches should receive so great a Dignity, that those who are sunk so low in Misery, should ever be raised to Happiness; that those who are so loaden with Sin and Iniquity should ever feel the weight of Mercy and beaten Glory; that those whose best Works deserve the lowest Hell, should, though not for, yet upon the performance of those Works obtain the highest Heavens: Though this may seem to be an impossibility, yet believe it, while you think of any Glory lower than the Glory of the Godhead, you think of nothing above a possibility and the reach of Industry. There are none of you excluded from a possibility of being saved; the Covenant of Grace runs in most large and comprehensive Terms, *Who ever believeth shall obtain eternal Life.* The Death of Christ and his Blood is a most sovereign Medicine, applicable not only to all Maladies, but to all Men, if they will believe: Tho' it is true none shall be saved but the Elect, yet is it true also that a possibility of Salvation extends farther than Election. Election gives the infallibility of Salvation, as Reprobation doth the infallibility of Damnation; but yet as there

there is a possibility for those that shall infallibly be saved, to perish if they do not believe; so is it possible for those that shall infallibly perish, to be saved if they will believe. The possibility of Salvation therefore stands not upon Election, but upon two other Grounds.

I. *First*, The meritorious and all-sufficient procurement of Christ, whereby he hath procured Salvation for all the World, and for all in the World, upon condition of their Faith, for that must still be taken in; for were it not so, how could we preach Remission of Sins in his Name to every Creature, were not his Death applicable to all? Then though some should believe, yet for want of a Sacrifice offered up, and a Price paid down for them, they should not be saved, though they should believe. How then is it that we seriously call all Men to repent and believe; that their Sins may be pardon'd and their Souls saved? Certainly unless the death of Christ hath procured Salvation for all Men upon condition of Faith and Repentance, such Calls would be false in us, and vain to them; for so we should promise Salvation upon believing, to those

those to whom though they should believe, Salvation should be denied, because they want a Covenant made with them, and a Surety to undertake for them: Therefore, I say, Christ's procurement is general so far, that whoever believes shall receive the Benefit of his Death.

*Secondly,* As the Death of Christ is applicable to all for Salvation if they believe, so Faith that alone applies this Death is attainable by you all if you be not wanting to your selves; you are none of you under an impossibility of believing, and therefore not under an impossibility of Salvation. Though it be certain that some shall infallibly persevere in Infidelity, yet there is none that hears the sound of the *Gospel*, and the outward Call of God in his Word, but may believe and obey if they be not wanting to themselves: Neither is this Doctrin *Arminianism*, nor is it prejudicial to the efficacious Grace of God, whereby the Will is powerfully swayed to Faith and Obedience; for the converting Grace of God is not given to make Men capable to believe and to be converted, but it is given to make them actually

actually believing and actually converting. The most wicked Man that is, without the converting Grace of God, is capable to be converted even in his state of Unregeneracy, and converting Grace gives not any new Power to enable us to be converted, but it gives us an actual Conversion. Some shall never believe, and why? not because they are under an impossibility, but because they will not believe; it is not because they cannot, but because they will not, unless we would so gratifie their Sloth as to call their obstinacy an impossibility: It is true they are obstinate, and that obstinacy can never be cured without efficacious Grace, but yet that obstinacy is not properly called an impossibility.

Well, since Salvation is a thing possible, why do you not labour for it that your Souls may be eternally happy? Christ hath the *Key of David*, and he opens and none shuts; and he hath opened the everlasting Gate to you all, and bids you all enter and take Possession; there stand no grim Guards to keep out you, or you; you cannot complain that you are excluded by a forcible Decree,

cree, no you shut the Doors upon your selves, and refuse to enter. And this is the first Reason why Salvation is not Labour in vain, because the end is possible to be attained.

Secondly, *There are also right means made known to you for the obtaining of this End.* Jacob in his *Dream* saw a Ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven. Certainly there is a *Jacob's Ladder* reaching up from Earth to Heaven that is more than a *Dream*; every Round in it is either a Grace or a Duty; it is not hid from you what Grace you must act, what Duties you must perform, that you may obtain Happiness; these are direct and proper means to it, nay, not only means to it, but the initials and beginnings of it. The glimmering *Light of Nature* could discover that there was a future Happiness, but it could not discover to us the right means thither, it could not direct us to believe in a crucified Saviour, and therefore to write by this dim *Light of Nature* had been Labour in vain: But now we know the way of Salvation is by Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; now we know that

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Holiness and Obedience do as certainly lead to Heaven, as Sin and Disobedience drag down to Hell; and therefore while we continue believing and working, is there any fear? Nay, is there any possibility of disappointment in our great End? It is as impossible that Faith and Obedience should not lead unto Glory, as it is that Faith should, or Obedience not continue in Glory: And therefore, *O Soul*, be confident of success. Hast thou any good Evidences that thy Graces are genuine and true, though but weak; that thy Duties are sincere, though but imperfect; and that thou doest work the Works of God with a steady Heart, though with a trembling Hand? Give this Assurance one lift higher, and as thou art already assured of the Truth of thy Grace, and of the Sincerity of thy Obedience, so henceforth be as much assured of thy future Glory, as if it were no longer future, but now actually in thy present Possession; thy dawning shall break forth into a most perfect Day; the Womb of thy Morning Twilight shall be delivered of a Noon-tide Brightness; thy Spark shall become a Sun; thy Seed of Grace shall sprout till it be fit for trans-

transplantation into Paradise, and there shall flower into Glory.

But may a poor Soul say, Though the Object means that I now use for the obtaining of Salvation be right to effect it, if still persisted in; yet I fear lest the many Corruptions, Temptations and Hardships that I meet with may turn me off from following my Work, defeat me of my End, and make all I have done as so much Labour in vain, and therefore I could have this confidence and assurance that you speak of, did I not fear this, that I should desist in my Work.

Would you have good security against this? Well then in the Third place, the laborious Christian as he useth right means, so he shall continue and persevere in the use of them till he hath wrought out his own Salvation by them; and therefore he shall certainly accomplish his End, and his Labour shall not be in vain. It is true if you desist from working, all that you have hitherto done will be in vain, your Faith in vain, your Tears in vain, your Prayers in vain, all in vain: And therefore this should cause you to work with

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Fear and Trembling, lest the Wiles of Satan and the deceitfulness of your own Hearts, should intice you from your Work, and cheat you of your Reward. *Let us therefore fear* (says the Apostle) *lest a Promise being made us of entring into his Rest, any of us should fall short.* Yet as this may cause holy Fear, so it may be matter of spiritual Joy and Rejoycing, that notwithstanding the deadness of our Hearts, the slackness of our Hands, the many Avocations from without, the many Interruptions from within, yet none of us shall forsake our Work till we have brought it to Perfection; our Obedience shall be crowned with Perseverance, and our Perseverance with Glory and Immortality. See for this that of the Apostle, *We are confident of this thing, that he that hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ.* Let therefore the Mouth of Calumny be for ever stopt, that accuseth this comfortable Doctrine of the Saints Perseverance through Grace unto Glory, that accuseth of patronizing Sloth and Idleness. Some do fasten this Viper upon it; let Christians live as they list, though careless of good Works, yea, though continually employed

ployed in evil Works, yet being Christians they need not fear that they shall fall short of Glory. But though we do affirm that every true Christian shall certainly inherit Heaven and Glory, yet we shake off this pernicious confidence, for he is no true Christian who is not zealous and careful of good Works, whose knowledge of his own Estate doth not provoke him *to walk worthy of that Vocation wherewith he is called*, whose hope of Heaven doth not enable him *to purify himself, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God*. What a contradiction is it to say, we patronize sinful Sloth in Men, when we tell them if they are true Christians that they shall continue working? Is it Sloth to continue working? Or do we encourage Men to be idle, by assuring them if they are Christians they must and shall work? Yet this is the natural strain and tendency of our *Doctrin*. What greater Incouragement can you have to Obedience than this? If you will work you shall not fail of your End, because the End it self is possible, because the Means to it are direct and certain, and because if you once begin to work, you shall most assuredly per-

severe till you have attained that End, even the Salvation of your own Souls. And this is one Reason why your Labour shall not be in vain.

2. Secondly, Your Labour shall not be in vain, because this End shall fully answer, yea, infinitely exceed all that Cost and Pains you are at in procuring it. It is not so in the Things of this World. As to this

*Psal. 39.6.* that of the Psalmist holds true, Surely every Man walketh in a vain Shew, surely they are disquieted in vain. Though they do attain their End, and that because that very End that they grasp is it self but Vanity. But can any Man account Heaven and Happiness a vain Thing? Is it not infinitely worth all, yea, more than all that thou canst do or suffer for it? Certainly when you come to enjoy it, you will not think it a hard Bargain that it stood you in so many Duties and Difficulties before you came to the possession of it: No, if there could be any Sorrow in that state of perfect Joy, it would be, not that we have done so much, but that we have done no more; not that we have gone through so much Anguish in Repentance, or that we have sustained such great

great Conflicts in Self-denial and Mortification, but that we waded no deeper in our own Tears, and deeper in the Blood of our own Lusts ; that we have not more vexed and crossed our carnal self, and taken more Pains in the ways of God ; could there be any Sorrow in Heaven this would be the cause of it : But certainly a great part of our Joy there will be to reflect back upon those Duties and Works of Obedience, through which , though with much strugling and striving, we have attained unto that most blessed State. And this is the last Argument or Motive that I shall insist upon ; Work, for your Labour shall not be in vain, you shall certainly accomplish your End, and this End shall abundantly recompence you for all your Labour and Pains.

Well then to conclude this Head, you have at large seen what can be pleaded on the behalf of Obedience ; What is it now that you can *Object* against these Things ? Are they not true ? Are they not cogent ? Your Consciences I know tell you that they are so ; why then do they not prevail with

N 3 you ?

you? Why sit you still holding your Arms in your Bosoms? Sirs, I have not spoken to you *Fables* or *Mysteries* that cannot be understood, but the Truth in all plainess; and if you will not lay it to Heart, believe it there is a Day a coming, when you shall too late know that once you had a proffer of Salvation, and you might have been happy for working for it: But, alas! this is the desperate Folly of Men, they do not prize Salvation while it is attainable, they never account their Souls precious till they are lost, yea, and lost beyond all hope of recovery. I cannot tell how these many and weighty *Arguments* that have been propounded may work with you, God and your own Consciences know; but this I can tell, the *Devil* can never bring such strong *Reasons* why you should destroy and damn your selves, as have now been laid before you why you should work out your own Salvation: And if they do not prevail with you, truly there is nothing that you can plead for your selves: You cannot plead that you could not do these Things, that Objection hath been answered; you cannot plead that there would no Profit arise to you

if

if you did them, for the *Reward* hath been abundantly discovered to you ; if you plead any thing it must be because you will not do them, and that is the thing that will condemn you : Therefore if these Things do not prevail with you, if you still continue obstinate, and instead of working the Works of God, you work the Works of your Father the *Devil* ; God acquits himself, your Blood lies not upon him, you have been fairly warned and told of it, but your own Destruction shall justly lie upon your own Heads.

And thus having done with the *Arguments* to press you to this Duty of working out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling ; I come now to Answer some *Objections*. And,

First, It may possibly enter into the Object. 1. Heart of some desperate Sinner or other to say, These indeed are strong Arguments that have been propounded for the inforcing this Duty of working out our Salvation upon those that expect Salvation ; but for my part I pretend not so high, let me but now enjoy the Sins that I serve, and the Pleasures that I pursue, and for the

state of my Soul hereafter, I shall commend it to the Mercy of God ; had I true Grace, I might be persuaded to attempt this hard Work with hopes of some good success ; but I own my self to be a Sinner, and you tell me I cannot change my own Heart, and without this change no Salvation can be expected ; why then should I disquiet my self in vain, by labouring for that which I cannot accomplitb ? If I must perish, I will perish with as much Ease and Pleasure as I may ; if I must go to Hell, I may be as soon carried down thither in a Flood of Tears, as with a Flood of Sins ; if God hath sentenced me to Hell hereafter, why should I sentence my self to a Hell here ? And therefore if Salvation and Happiness be such Points, I will give them over and embrace more easie and obvious Pleasures.

I know there is no pious Heart but shivereth with Horror at such Language as this is , though it be but presented to them ; and may , and do, think it rather the Speech of Devils than Men that are in a way of Salvation. It is true it is the Speech of Devils, but it is the Speech of Devils in Mens Hearts. But what now ? Shall we

leave

leave these Men to such desperate Resolutions as these are? Shall we suffer them thus to go down flaming to Hell? Certainly Religion hath reason enough in it to convince such as these, if they will but shew themselves to be rational Men. For,

Consider, thou who hadst rather perish than make thy Life a Trouble to thee by Obedience, God under thy Disobedience may make thy Life a Trouble, yea, a Hell to thee by his Terrors. Thou thinkest the filthy Garments of thy Sin and Pollution sit more easie and loose about thee, than the close Garments of Holiness and Obedience will do; nay, but God can wrap and roll these filthy Garments of thine in Brimstone, and set them on Fire about thine Ears. Many Mens Consciences indeed are like *Iron* that hath lain for some time out of the Fire, that you would not suspect to be hot till you let some Water fall upon it, and then it appears to be so by its noise and hissing: So truly their Consciences seem cold and dead and such as you might handle at your pleasure; but when once God lets fall some Drops of his

his Wrath upon their Consciences, then they hiss and boil, and fill the Soul with Smoak and Smother. A hard Heart is no security from a troubled Conscience. It is with the Hearts and Consciences of wicked Men, as it is with a Sore in the Body, which it may beis the hardest part in the Body and yet the forest also, the red Flesh about the Sore is hard and yet full of Pain and Anguish: So is it many times with the Hearts and Consciences of wicked Men, which though they are exceeding hard, yet are full of Pain and Anguish. We

Psal. 88.3. *read of Hemian, That whilst he suffered the Terrors of God he was distracted.*

Psal. 116.3 *And David tells us, The Sorrows of Death compass'd me about, and the Pains of Hell got hold of me.* And if the Wrath of the Almighty be thus sore and terrible upon these holy Men, whose Hearts were found towards God; how fretting and gauling will it be upon the ulcerated Consciences of Sinners? No Man hath his present Contentment and Delight in his own Power, no more than he hath his own Conscience in his own Power, which will speak, yea, and speak terrible Things too, when the Sinner hath done all he can to stifle it;

it; nay, let every Sinner speak, How is it with you after the madness and rage of your Sin is over? Are you not then haunted with direful Thoughts of Horror and Amazement, that are as it were gnawing and devouring your Hearts? And are these they who are content to buy Ease and Quietness at so dear a rate, as the loss of their precious and immortal Souls, and to be eternally tormented hereafter, besides their present Pain and Anguish after the committing of Sin now, which if they feel not always yet frequently they do? But if God should give them up to such hardness of Heart as to become altogether insensible and stupid while they continue in this World, yet what will this avail them? Will they not purchase their Ease and Pleasure very dearly, to lose their Souls for ever hereafter, and to suffer the Pains of Hell eternally? The *Devil* hath put a horrid Cheat upon these Men; for they do not change their Troubles and Sorrows, but only the time of them, and for a little fansied sensual Ease and Pleasure in this World, which it may be they may enjoy and it may be not; for possibly God may be so provoked by them,

that

that he may suddenly cut them off in their Sins ; but if not, it is but for a very little time that the Pleasures of their Sins and Lusts will last, and then an Eternity of Pain and Torment shall be their Portion. Sinners, be not therefore deceived ; suffer not the Devil to abuse you, and to impose his Drudgery upon you, under the pretence of Ease and Quietness : If therefore it be only present Contentment and Satisfaction that you seek , if you think that you shall perish, but yet you would perish the easiest way ; that is not, believe it, that is not by giving up of your selves to a way and course of Sin, but in a way of Duty and laborious Working ; in that only can you find present Contentment, and in that possibly you may find eternal Happiness.

Object.

*But may some say, The Works of God would be more pleasing to us, if we could but work them. But first we have no working Principle, we are in a state of Nature and without Grace, so that we cannot work. And, Secondly, we cannot implant this Grace in our selves.*

To

To this I Answer, Though you neither have Grace, nor can work Grace in your selves, yet you can do much, yea, very much in order to Salvation by the mere Strength of Nature, and the liberty of your own Will: This is a Consideration that needs to be frequently pressed upon the Consciences of wicked Men, they often hear unto what a state of Weakness Sin hath reduced them, and that without Grace they can do nothing that is pleasing unto God, or advantagious to themselves; and by this they are put out of conceit of setting upon the Work of God, and leave the Salvation of their Souls at all adventures. Consider therefore, Sinners, how much you may do towards your own Salvation from your own Nature and Free-will. And here,

What Sinners may do towards their own Salvation.

First, *The vilest Sinner even by the power of Nature and his own Free-will, may attain to the highest degree and pitch of preparation that is usually wrought in the Heart antecedently or before true Grace.* Such are legal Conviction and Contrition, a sad sight of Sin, and a deep sorrow for it, together with strong Resolutions

I.

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lutions and Purposes against it, with strong Desires after Grace and Holiness, and the like: And the Reason of this is because all these Things are short of Grace; and whatever is short of true Grace falls within the compass of Nature and Free-will, which is common unto all Men; which though it be indeed wounded and maimed, yet may make shift to go so far as this comes to. True Grace now is only the Creation of the Power of God, and not the Production of Nature or Free-will: Wherefore after all this preparation is wrought, a Sinner can no more work Grace in himself than he could before, yet is he now nearer to Grace, and in a greater probability of it than he was before; and there is none but may go thus far, if they will but improve that Power and Ability that they have.

2. Secondly, *There is no Duty in Religion but the Power of Nature may carry a man out to the external performance thereof, and that with Affection and Enlargement also.* Ahab humbles himself. Herod heard John Baptist gladly. And so Sinners can Pray, Hear, Read, Meditate and Discourse of the Things of God;

No Duty in Religion but the Power of Nature may carry a man out to the external performance thereof, and that with Affection and Enlargement also.

God ; others have done so formerly, and therefore they may and can do so now. Indeed heretofore there were peculiar Gifts bestowed upon wicked Persons immediately from God, as *Balaam* was made to prophesie of Christ, <sup>Numb.</sup> 24. 17. and the like : But these are now ceased, and all unregenerate Persons now, have the same Power and Faculties in them one as well as another, and may be able to do one as much as another in the performance of spiritual Duties if they themselves will.

Thirdly, *There is no wicked Man whatever but may, by the meer Power of Nature, restrain himself from the commission of Sin*: I speak not of Sins collectively taken, for no Man can so say his Heart or Life is clean and pure ; but he may keep out of notorious and scandalous Sins. There is no Sinner that hath given himself up to his Lusts, but may if he will for the future live inoffensively , that neither the World nor his own Conscience may have much to accuse him of besides common Infirmities : Mark the Reason of this ; because wicked Men commonly make choice of Sin, this Sin they will live in, and that Sin they will not

3.  
The Pow-  
er of Na-  
ture will  
keep a  
Man from  
scandalous  
Sins.

not live in : The *Drunkard* is not *Covetous*, and the *Covetous Man* is not a *Drunkard*, and so I may say of other Sins: Now it is from the Power of Nature that wicked Men refrain from the commission of any one Sin, and not from the Power of Grace: And therefore if one Sinner hath Power to keep from this Sin, and another Sinner hath Power to keep from the commission of another, and a third from a third Sin, then every Sinner may, by the Power of Nature, keep from all those Sins that any of those Sinners do keep themselves from, because there is the same Power in each Sinner to lay the same restraint upon this or that Sin, that others keep from.

4.  
Sinners  
may con-  
tinue con-  
stantly in  
the per-  
formance  
of Duty.

Fourthly, *There is no Man, how great a Sinner soever, but if he will he may with constancy, yea, to the end and period of his Life, continue thus in the performance of Duties, and in the avoiding of Sins by the Power of Nature only*: For if it be possible that Men should do it at any time, then it is possible for them to do it continually: No more Power is required to inable them this Day, than was required the Day past; nor no more Power

Power is required for the Day to come, than was for this Day now present; therefore having Strength to avoid them one time, they might also avoid them another time, yea, and continually persevere in so doing, if they would keep a daily constant Watch against them.

Fifthly, *There is no Man but through this perseverance and continuance may attain to Habitualness, and thereby to a facility and easiness in performance of Duties, and in avoiding of Sins.* When Men attain to are accustomed to a road and round of Duties, it is a trouble to them to omit them: So if Men did but set themselves to their utmost to perform Duties in a more hearty and cordial manner, those Duties would become easy to them; and if Men would but ingage themselves perseveringly to oppose their Corruptions, this would bring them to that pass, that it would be their Delight to keep from Sin and to perform Duty; and all this the Power of Nature would bring them to.

5.  
Through  
Persever-  
ance Sin-  
ners may  
habitual-  
ness and  
facility in  
Duty.

Now Sinners, you see what a large Tenor you have; you are not staked down fast that you can do nothing; no,

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it is much, yea, very much that you may do in order to your Salvation.

But here some may possibly say, We hope that these Words are not true; for they would not be able to do so much as all this comes to, because they are willing to do nothing at all: But let such know, that that which will condemn them at the last Day, will be, that they have not done what they might have done, in performing of Duties and in opposing of Sins, and therefore they wilfully fall short of Happiness and Salvation.

**Object.**

*But may some say, If we should put forth to our utmost the Power of Nature, what would that avail us? We cannot thereby work Grace in our selves, and without Grace no Salvation is to be had.*

**Answ.**

To this I *Answer*; Consider you do not know but, whilst you are thus doing what you can, God may come in and by his Grace enable you to do what you cannot do: God is not wont to be wanting in this particular unto any; *He is found of those that seek him not*; and much

much more will he be found of those that seek him and enquire after him, though it be but by the weak Endeavours of Nature.

*But may some say, Hath God obliged Obj&.*  
*himself to convert and save those that do*  
*to the utmost what Nature inables them to*  
*do in desiring Salvation and in seeking to*  
*obtain it ?*

To this I *Answer*; God hath not Answ.  
bound himself, but usually he doth so; God is neither bound to give Grace upon the Endeavours of Nature, neither is he wont to deny it. Can you say that ever you knew or heard of any careful, conscientious, industrious Soul, that diligently and conscientiously exercised it self in performing of Duties and in avoiding of Sins, that was not at last truly converted and eternally saved; and why then should you doubt or think that you shall be the first? Cast your self therefore upon God, trusting to his rich and free Grace, doing the utmost of your Endeavours.

However, suppose the worst, that thou art never converted nor saved, which Supposition is very dreadful and

terrible; and if thou art careful and conscientious to improve thy Abilities to the utmost, it is altogether improbable; but suppose the worst:

1. *First*, Thou livest here then more according to the Rule of Nature and Reason than others do; for when others wallow in Sin, thou shewest thy self to be more like a rational Man, thou art sensible thou hast a Soul of more Worth than to be lost for want of Care and Diligence. And then,

2. *Secondly*, Thy Pains and Punishments hereafter shall be greatly mitigated. Possibly thou mayest slight this, because at best it is Damnation; yea, but consider there are several degrees of *Torments* in *Hell*: Now thy Workings and Endeavours may free thee from many degrees of Torment, and therefore they free thee from many *Hells*; and is not this worth thy Labour? Nay, and not only so, but it is very probable you may altogether escape those Torments, if you be conscientious in doing your utmost Endeavours.

And now, methinks, every one that hath but Reason to judge, and a Soul to save, must needs see so much strength and force in the Arguments that have been propounded, that the next Question should be, *What must we do to work John 6.26. the Works of God?* In every Trade and Profession there is some kind of Mystery, that gives to them that have attained to it, a quicker dispatch in their Business than other Men have. And so is it in the Work and Profession of a Christian, there is an Art and Mystery, that he that is Master of shall make good dispatch in his great Work, and possibly we may have some insight into it by these following Directions.

First, If you would work out your own Direct. i.  
Salvation, then digest and dispose your  
Work into a right Order and Method.  
Immethodicalness breeds Confusion,  
and makes that a Tumult and a heap of  
Business, that would otherwise become  
a Trade in Christianity; one attain-  
ment makes way for and opens into  
another; and to attempt any thing in  
Christianity by Leaps and Jumps as it  
were, is fruitless, unprofitable and vain.  
No wise Man will try to mount up the

highest Round of a Ladder at the first step. But yet many such preposterous Endeavours there are found among Men in the working out of their Salvation. In respect of Doctrinals St. Paul tells us, some built *Hay* and *Stubble* upon a *Foundation of Gold*, 1 Cor. 8. But in respect of Practicals, it is frequent that many Men endeavour to build *Gold* upon a *Foundation of Hay* and *Stubble*: These Mens Buildings will soon totter, fall and come to nothing but Ruin, Shame and Disappointment. Now the right disposing of your great Work lies thus. *First*, You are to work from Nature for Grace, and then from Grace unto the holy and spiritual performance of Duty, by which Grace is much confirmed and strengthened; and so continuing in Duty to arrive at Assurance; and from this the next step is Salvation. From Nature to Grace, and from Grace to Duty. See this Method laid down by the Apostle, *Let us*, says he, *have Grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly fear.* This is the *Ladder of Heaven*, whose bottom Step is below Grace in Nature, and whose utmost Step is above it in absolute Perfection and

Heb. 12.  
28.

and Glory. *First*, there must be Grace before any Duty can be performed acceptably unto God. But now most Men pervert and disturb this Method ; and the ordinary way of Disturbance is this, they are frequent in Duties, but they perform them not either for Grace, or from Grace ; neither that they may attain Grace by them, nor that they may exercise Grace in them : And yet, notwithstanding, these Men think and hope to work out Salvation by such Duties as these are, making a Leap from Duties to Salvation, neglecting to obtain that Grace that can make their Duties acceptable and saving ; and hence it is that they make no quicker dispatch and riddance in their great Work. Now such Attempts as these are,

*First, Discouraging and disheartning.*  
And,

1.

*Secondly, They are vain and fruitless.*

2.

*First, They are very discouraging.*  
Duties never flow freely from the Soul where Grace is not like a continual Fountain to supply it. *Job* speaking of

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Job 27.10. the *Hypocrite*, asks this Question, *Will he delight himself in God? will he always call upon him?* No, he will not. It is not possible that he should do so, tho' for a time he may drive at a high rate, praying both with Fervency and Affection, yet will he soon decay and faint, because he hath no Life of Grace to carry him through Duties; but he finds them to flow stubbornly from him, and therefore through Weariness and Discontent at last he gives them over. The good Works of graceless Persons may be as flourishing as if indeed they were true Saints; but they have not a Root to supply them, *the Root of the Matter*, as Job speaks, *is not in them*, and therefore they are soon nipt and fade away. It is simply impossible that a Person, without the Life and Power of Grace, should persevere in a cordial, affectionate performance of good Works; Interest, Credit, Respect and natural Conscience, are too weak Wheels for so great a Burthen; it is Grace only that can over-ballance all outward Discouragements, yea, and which is more that alone can remove all inward also; This can make Obedience sweet to a Child of God, which to a wicked Man must

inust needs be irksome, and that because he hath no relish in them.

*St. Matth. 16. 23. Thou savourest not the* Mat. 16.

*things that are of God;* this may be<sup>23.</sup>

much more faid of graceless Persons, because they have not Salt in them, for so Grace is called, that shoulde make

Col. 4. 6.

holy and heavenly Things to be favoury to them.

What a Torment is it to be still chewing an unsavory Prayer and an unsavory Meditation; to hear and speak those Words that their Ears cannot relish? Must I always, *says the Sinner,* offer this force to my self? Must I still strain and pump for Tears and Sighs?

Were Holines as easie to me as it is to some, no Life would I chuse sooner than that; but I am straitned and pinched up, and all good Things come out of me like the evil Spirit, which rends and tares me, and is a torture and anguish to my Heart and Bowels: And it is so, because in the performance of them there is a neglect of that Grace that shoulde make Duties become easy, and therefore such a one will shortly give over Duties themselves, which he finds to be so troublesome, yea, and also give over all hopes of attaining any good at all by them.

Secondly,

2. Secondly, Such Works are also, as to the obtaining of the last and main End, vain and fruitless, and that upon two Accounts.

First, Because the acting of Grace is the Life and Spirit of all our Works, without which they are all but Car-kasses and dead Things, and only equivocally called good Works; even as the Picture of a Man may be called a Man. We are, says the Apostle, his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. As after the first Creation God took a survey of all the Works of his Hands, and pronounced them all very good, so there is no Work of ours that God will pronounce to be a good Work, but what is the effect of his creating Power, that is, the product of his second Creation: Created, says the Apostle, to good Works. Good Works are no otherwise necessary to Salvation, but as they are the exercises of Grace, by which we express the life and likeness of God, so only are they necessary unto Salvation. How should Grace be seen and known but by Works? First, God imprinted his own Image upon our

our Souls in Regeneration, and stamps us Feature for Feature, Grace for Grace, and Glory for Glory : But now because this is hid and concealed, therefore are we to copy forth this Image in a holy Conversation, and to express every Grace in some Duty or Work of Obedience or other. As those that we call *falling Stars* dart from Heaven and draw after them long Trains of Light , so God would have us to shoot up to Heaven, but yet to leave a Train of Light behind us ; our Graces must shine always, we must go on in good Works, and these good Works are of no value or account with God, of which Grace is not the End or Principle. What says the Apostle ? *Though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor and have not Char- 3.* <sup>1 Cor. 13.</sup>

*rity, it profiteth me nothing.* Can a Man bestow all his Goods upon the Poor, and not be charitable ? Indeed the Word that we translate *Charity*, might, for the avoiding of some Mistakes, better have been translated *Love*; but, however, we must take *Charity* for a disposition to relieve the Wants and Necessities of others with respect of *Love* to God and his Image; if this good Work be not from Grace through a Prin-

Principle of *Love* to God and Obedience to his Command, it is but the empty Shell and Husk of a good Work, and it availeth a Man nothing. Yea further, if after this, *I give my Body to be burned and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*: If my Soul burn not as clear and bright in *Love*, as my Body in the Flames, it availeth me nothing, I burn only what was dead before, and offer a Carkas instead of a Sacrifice. There is no Work or Duty, how specious soever, that is of any profit to the Soul, if that Work or Duty hath not the Life and Power of some Grace or other expressed in it. Well then, this is the first Ground why Works without Grace are fruitless, because they are empty and liveless. Grace is the Life and Spirit of good Works.

2. *Secondly*, All Works and Duties whatever without Grace leave the Heart in the same estate of Sin, and therefore the Person in the same estate of Wrath and Condemnation as before. For,

1. *First*, All of them are not a sufficient expiation for the guilt of any one Sin, Should such Men pray and sigh till their

their Breath were turned into a Cloud, and covered the Face of the whole Sky : Should they weep till they drown'd themselves in their own Tears, yet if all this could be supposed to be only the remorse of Nature, and not true and godly Sorrow ; they would still be under the same state of Condemnation as the most feared Sinner in the World. The Prophet *Micah* tells of some that bid very high for Pardon and Forgiveness, as if they were resolved to carry it at any rate whatever. *Wherewith*, say they, *shall we come before the Lord and Micah 6.  
bow our selves before the most-high God ? 6, 7.*  
*Shall we come before him with burnt Offerings, and with Calves of a Year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, and with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil ? Shall we give our First-born for our Transgressions, the Fruit of our Bodies for the Sin of our Souls ?* What high Rates are here bidden, and yet all this falls short ! There is but one Grace, and that is *Faith*, that can give us a Right and Title to that Righteousness that shall be a sufficient Expiation and Attonement for all our Sins.

*Secondly,*

2. *Secondly, All Attainments and Attempts, all Endeavours and Duties, without Grace, can never mortifie and subdue the Power and Dominion of any one Lust or Corruption.* Men may divert and chain, and restrain their Corruptions, and impale in their Lusts, so that they shall not break forth into any outragious Wickedness; but yet without Grace they can never subdue them, because it is Grace alone that can lay the Ax to the Root of this evil Tree. Well then, notwithstanding all that hath been said concerning the Power of Nature, what Men may do thereby and how far they may go, yet here you see what Impotency there is in Nature without Grace, and what it cannot reach to perform. But now this is not spoken that hereby any should be discouraged from Working, and because some doubt of the Truth of their Graces, that therefore they should desist from a course of Holines and Obedience; this were plainly to thwart the whole design of this Subject: No, all that hath been said, is, to persuade Men not to rest satisfied in any Work of Obedience or Religion, in which some Grace is  
not

not breathed or exercised, nor to look upon them at all as inductive to Salvation as in themselves, but as in reference to true Grace. How many poor Souls are there, who because they run on in a round of Duties, because they do something that they call good Works, think that Salvation is as sure their own, as if all the Promises in the Scripture were sealed and delivered to them by God himself? And yet poor Creatures, never examine or regard from what Principle this their Obedience flows, whether from a Principle of Grace, or from the old corrupt Principle of Nature, new-vampt from some new Operations of the common Spirit: Believe it, this is not that Obedience that God requires, nor that he will accept; an inward *Groan*, if breathed by Grace, is of more account with God, and will be more available to the Soul than the most pompous and specious Services of unregenerate Men. What is it to God, when you offer not only the Blind and the Lame, but the Dead also? Is it not rather an Abomination than Obedience? The Apostle tells us, *Without Works, Jam. 3.20. Faith is dead.* And it is as true on the other side also, that Works without Faith

Faith and other Graces of the Spirit, are not only dead, but rotten and noisome. Every Duty Men perform in a graceless State and Condition God must needs loath it and them for it;

Prov. 28. 9. *The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord.* It is as hateful unto God, as Vapors that ascend up out of *Tombs*, from putrified Bodies, are unto us. What then? must such Persons give up themselves to Sin therefore? God forbid. No, rather let such think thus; if our Duties and our Righteousness be so loathsome, what are our Sins and Iniquities? Though every Sinner be *dead in Sins and Trespasses*, yet is it less offensive to have a dead Carkass embalmed than to have it lie open. Still therefore continue working, but in your working, *First*, aim at the obtaining of Grace, before you aim at the obtaining of Heaven and Salvation; let it at no time content you that such and such Duties you have performed, but look what Grace have you acted in them; what is there of God breathing in this Prayer that I now put up? How am I in Hearing, in Meditation, in Discoursing of the Things of God? Is my Heart holy and spiritual? Are my Affe-

Affections pure and fervent? Are my Graces active and vigorous? And are they vigorous in this Work of Obedience? Else to perform Duties, and to neglect Grace that alone can enable us to perform Duties acceptably, is only to go to Hell a little more cleanly.

Secondly, *If you would work out your Direct. 2. own Salvation, as you must look to the actings of Grace, as well as to the performance of Duties, so you must labour to grow and increase in those Graces that are most active and working; and they are Two, the Grace of Faith, and the Grace of Love.* To grow strong in these Graces is the most compendious way for a Christian to dispatch his great Work; I may call them the two Hands of a Christian; and he that is most active in these, works out his Salvation with both Hands earnestly.

First, *The actings of Faith is of mighty advantage to the working out of our Salvation.* Two Senses there are in which Salvation may be said to be wrought out. First, In Title: And, Secondly, In actual Possession and Enjoyment. Now Faith is a working out of the one,

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and a compendious furtherance towards the working out of the other.

John 6.  
24, 29.

I. *First*, Upon our believing Salvation is already wrought out for us in Right and Title. *He that believeth shall be saved*; here is the Title. The great Work is then done and finished, when once Faith is wrought: And therefore, when the Jews came to enquire of our Saviour, *How they should do to work the Works of God?* Our Lord tells them, *This is the Work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent*. Nay further, as a Faith of Adherence or Acceptance gives a Right and Title to Salvation, so a Faith of full Assurance is this Salvation it self: For, *Faith is the substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen*: In its justifying Act it gives a Title to Salvation, in its assuring Act it gives the substance of the Thing it self; for it is much at one to a strong Faith to believe Heaven, and to enjoy it.

*Secondly*, Faith doth compendiously further and promote the working out of our Salvation in actual possession; and that because Faith is that Grace which fetcheth

fetcheth all that ability and strength from Christ, whereby a Christian is enabled to work: Faith is not only a Grace of it self, but it is Steward and Purveyor for all other Graces, and its Office is to bring in Provision for them while they are working; and therefore as a Mans Faith grows either stronger or weaker, so his Work goes on more or less vigorously. When other Graces are in want, and cry Give, Give, then Faith betakes it self to Christ, and faith, *Lord*, such a Grace stands in need of so much Strength to support it, and such a Grace stands in need of so much Support to act it, and I have nothing to give it my self, and therefore I come to fetch Supplies from thee: And certainly this Faith that comes thus empty-handed unto Christ, never goes away empty-handed from Christ. What is it that you complain of? Is it that the Work stands at a stay, and you cannot make it go forward? Is it that Temptations are strong and violent, that Duties are hard, irksome and difficult? Why set Faith on work to go to Christ, and there you may be sure to have Supply, because Faith is an omnipotent Grace; *All things are possible*

*to him that believeth*, and that because all things are possible to that God, and to that Christ, on whom Faith is acted. There is no Grace, nor no Supply, nor Mercy laid up in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is all in the Hands of a Believer's Faith, and he may take from thence whatsoever he needs to supply the present Wants and Necessities of his Soul.

2. Secondly, *Another working Grace is the fervent actings of Love.* Love is the great Wheel of the Soul that sets all the rest a moving, and makes it like the *Chariots of Aminadab*, to run swiftly towards its desired Object. There is a mutual dependence between Faith and Love in their working; Love depends upon Faith to strengthen it, and Faith depends again upon Love to act it. As we love not that which we do not know, and our knowledge of God and of the Things of Eternity is by Faith, not by Vision, so those Things which we do know and which we do believe, yet if we love them not we shall never endeavour after them: The Apostle therefore tells us, that *Faith worketh by Love.* Now there is a threefold spiritual

tual Love required to expedite our great Work.

First, *A transcendent Love of God.*

1.

Secondly, *A regular Love of our selves.*

2.

Thirdly, *A complacential Love unto and Delight in our Work it self.* Now when the Affections go out after these Objects of Love, this will much facilitate our great Work.

3.

First, *The Love of God is a great help to our Duty.* Our Saviour therefore urgeth Obedience upon this very account ; *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* John 14. And, says the Apostle, this is the Love of <sup>15.</sup> <sup>1 John 5. 3.</sup> God, that is, this is a certain Sign, or it is the constant effect of our Love to God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous ; they are not grievous because they are his Commandments who is the Love and Joy of our Souls. Divine Love always conforms it self to divine Precepts, and that for two Reasons :

First, Because this Grace, as it desires the beatiful Union to God in Glory

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hereafter, for Love is the desire of Union ; so now it causes an unspeakable Union of Will, and a supernatural sympathy of Affection betwixt God and the Soul ; which Union cannot be a Union of Equality or Entity as is in the Persons of the blessed Trinity, and therefore it is a Union of Subordination of a Christians Will to the Will of God. Now what is this Will of God ?

*1 Thes. 4. 3.* Why the *Apostle* tells us ; *This is the Will of God*, says he, *even your Sanctification*. And the same *Apostle* tells us, *Eph. 2. 10.* in another place, *We are his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, that God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*. And is this Gods Will, and shall it not be our Work ? Hath God ordained that we should walk therein, and shall we be averse from or slothful thereunto ? How can we pretend we love God, while we neglect the only Thing he requires from us, Holiness and Obedience ? God wills our Holiness, because there is no better a thing that he can Will next unto himself ; the Image of God, next to himself, is the most excellent and chiefest Good ; every thing, the nearer it approacheth unto God, the more desirable

it becomes in it self : Now that which comes most near unto God , and advanceth the Soul in some resemblance and similitude to him, is Holiness and Endeavours after Obedience, whereby we become conformable unto God, and attain some faint Shadows and Essays of the divine Perfections : The Soul wills in order unto Gods Will ; God now wills Holiness because it is most desirable, and we must will our own Holiness, because if we love God as we pretend to do, our Wills must be conformable to his holy Will.

Secondly, Love to God is a Help to Duty, because it is in and by Duty that we enjoy the Presence of God , and have Communion and Fellowship with him. These are the Lattices through which God appears to the longing Soul ; and though he many times vouchsafes but half Smiles and little Glances , yet in these reserved Communications the Soul finds so much sweetnes , as ingageth it to a constant performance of Duties all its Days : Here, says the Soul, God was wont to walk in his Sanctuary, here have I heard his Voice, here have I seen his Face, his

2.

Spirit hath here breathed upon me, his Consolations have here refreshed me, and therefore here will I wait upon him as long as I live. I remember well, *says the Soul*, when in Prayer and Meditation my Heart hath been filled by him, poured out to him, and accepted with him: I remember when he filled me first with Sighs, and then with Songs, and both alike unutterable; and therefore I will keep to the performance of these Duties, waiting for the further Discoveries and Manifestations of my God unto me.

2. Secondly, *As Love to God, so a regular Self-love will much help and further our Obedience and Duty.* And then is Self-love truly regular, when Men love their own Souls as God loves them. Now Gods love to the Souls of Men is such, that though *He wills all Men to be saved*, yet he wills that none shall be saved, *but through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.* And whilst we love our selves, if we observe the same method and order, this Self-love is always commendable and necessary. Desires after eternal Happiness and Salvation are natural to that Soul

Soul that is truly conscious of its own Immortality, and eternal, unalterable State and Condition; and when these Desires are directed to future Happiness through present Holiness, then are they regular and become gracious. We are not so straitly limited by Gods Sovereignty over us, but while we fix one Eye upon our Work, we may fix the other on our Reward: God is not so strict in his Prerogative over us, as to require Service from us from what we have already received from him: He is not as a cruel Lord and Master to say, Obey me, though afterwards you perish; see to it that you love and glorifie me, though I eternally punish you; though considering that infinite distance we stand at from God, we could object nothing against the Equity of his Proceedings: No, but God hath so graciously twisted his Glory and our Duty together, that while we promote the one we do also promote the other, and while we work for God we do but work for our selves. Now are there any that need to be persuaded to love themselves? Is it not the great and general Sin that all Men love and seek themselves? And do not Men by becoming

coming Self-lovers, become Self-destroyers? Yes, they do so; but it is because they seek themselves out of Gods way, that therefore they lose themselves for ever. *Religion* and *Holiness* are not such severe things, as to exclude Self-love; nay, right Self-love is that which is no where to be found separate from true Grace. Ministers call upon Men to exercise Self-denial and Self-abhorrence; and this the foolish World mistakes as if so be they exhorted them to divorce themselves from themselves, to lay aside all respect and consideration of Self, and to offer violence to the most common Principles of Self-preservation. No, would to God we all sought our selves more earnestly and constantly than we do, and that we all knew wherein our greatest Interest and Concernment did lie; then should we not leave our great Work undone, nor gratifie the Sloth of our corrupt Humors, and the sinful propensions of our carnal part, nor should we think what we do for Sin and Satan we do for our selves; no, all this is to hate our selves: And wicked Men at the last Day shall know, they have been their own most bitter and most implacable

cable Enemies, that they would not be content with any thing less than their own eternal Ruin. A true Christian is the only selfish Man in the World ; all others, they are not Self-lovers but Self-destroyers : What shall I say more than this ? The Apostle asks, *Did ever any Man hate his own Flesh ?* Did ever any Man delight to gash and burn, to wrack and torture himself ? Truly I may ask the quite contrary. Do almost any love their own Spirits, their spiritual part, their Souls ? This they wound and gash by many a bloody Sin, this they burn and fear by hardness and impenitency ; this they go about to torture and torment in *Hell* for ever. Oh therefore be persuaded at length to take pity on your selves, considering you are but destroying while you think you are embracing of your selves ; and that will be found but Self-murder at last, which you now call Self-love.

Thirdly, *A complacential Love to, and 3.  
Delight in your Work, is a great furtherance of it.* A wicked Man serves God <sup>Love to  
our Work  
makes it  
easie.</sup> grudgingly, he murmurs at Duties, and looks upon them only as Tasks and Burthens, thinking every thing he doth

Mat. 11.  
28.

doth for God too much, too heavy and weighty. The Commands of God are all of them hard Sayings and grievous Impositions that he cannot bear ; he could believe Christ sooner in any thing than when he tells him, *My Yoke is easy and my Burthen is light.* Here he cannot believe Christ. Thus much time, saith the *lothful Sinner*, must I spend in Prayer, and there must I humble my self to God whom I hate, and confess before him those Sins that I love, and beg that Grace that I have slighted ; so much time must I spend in reading the Law that I never mean to observe, perusing over only the Sentence of my Condemnation ; and so often must I fix and dwell upon holy and spiritual Thoughts, which never at any time darted into, or passed intransiently, but they did discompose me, and leave me a damp and sadness upon my Spirit behind them ; and therefore because there is not a holy complacency and delight in the Service of God, all such Mens Endeavours are both faint, inconstant and languish while they are about them, and seldom do they re-assume them again. But a true Christian works with abundance of Delight and

Chear-

Chearfulness in the Service of God, in every Duty his Soul is filled full of holy Affections, by which it soars up to Heaven: Duties are Meat and Drink to him, spiritual *Manna*, in which he takes more satisfaction and contentment than wicked Men do in their Sins, and therefore he performs these Duties so earnestly, because he doth it with complacency: All that he repines at, is, that natural Necessity, sinful Weakness and Infirmities and worldly Employments, that do purloin so much of his time from this great Work. Now when once the Heart is brought to such a frame and temper as this, thus to delight in Obedience and in the Work and Service of God, then will this working for Salvation go on with Power.

Thirdly, *Another Direction is that in the Text, Work for Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* A trembling Hand best performs a Christians Work. Now this Fear is not a Fear of distrust or dispondency, for that is so contrary to this Duty of working for Salvation, as that it stupifies and benums all Endeavours, and is a great Enemy to the performance of this Duty. But,

Working  
for Salva-  
tion must  
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bling.

*First,*

I. First, It is a Fear of Solicitude and Carefulness as it stands opposed to carnal security, and that presumption that is the common and ordinary Destruction of most Men. This holy Fear is the best preservative of true Grace.

Rom. 11.  
20. The Apostle therefore tells us, *Thou standest by Faith; be not high-minded but*

*fear;* implying, they would not stand long though they stood by Faith, unless they were upheld with godly Fear: And the Reason is, because it is the property of Fear to foresee and forecall Dangers, and to put the Soul in a posture of defence and security before they approach: For as the wise Man tells us,

Prov. 20.3 *The prudent Man foreseeth the Evil and hideth himself, but the Simple pass on and are punished.* They are rash and confident in their Undertakings, and so they pass on and are punished. Fear makes a Christian circumspect and considerative with himself, how he may keep from Miscarriages in the performance of his great Work. If God call me to such a Duty, how shall I perform it? If to bear such a Cross and Affliction, how shall I glorifie him under it? If to conflict with such Temptations, how shall

shall I resist and overcome them? Yea, how shall I do to break through all Difficulties, Duties and Oppositions that I who am but a weak and feeble Christian may meet withal, and how shall I do to bear up? And thus pondring what may be his Duty, and forecasting what Duties God may call him unto, he is inabled to do what is his Duty at present, and what also may by Providence hereafter become his Duty: Nothing overtakes such a Man unexpected, nor doth any thing surprize him unprovided for it. And thus a careful Fear enables him in the performance of his great Work.

*Secondly*, A Fear of Humility and holy Reverence of God, induceth much to the working out of our Salvation, and that in three Particulars.

*First*, It much helps us in our great Work to fear God as our Lord and Master that sees and overlooks all our Works, observing both what we do, and how we do it also. That Servant must be desperately bold that will dare to be idle, or flight and perfunctory in his Work, while his Masters Eye is upon.

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upon him. Why Christians should consider Gods Eye is always upon them, in Praying, in Hearing, and in every Duty that they perform, yea, in every Action of their whole Lives: And if the Eye of a Master, that is but a Fellow Creature, nay, but a Fellow Servant, can have such awe and influence upon his Servant as to make him careful how he works and what he works, and to make him diligent in his Work: Should not much more the consideration of Gods Eye being upon us, who stands at an infinitee distance from us, cause a holy Fear and Diligence in us, in doing what our Lord and Master commands us?

2. *Secondly, Fear God also as him from whom you have all your Power and Ability to work ; Fear him, lest at any time through any neglect or mis-carriage of yours, he should be provoked to suspend his Influence and withdraw his Grace from you, and to leave you to your own Weakness and Impotency, upon whose influence all your Obedience doth depend.* This is the Apostles Argument in the Text, *Work with Fear, for God works in you both to Will*

*Will and to Do.* Holy diligence in Obedience cannot be more strongly enforced on an ingenious Spirit, than by considering all that Strength and Ability that we have to work, is received from God, and therefore should be improved for God, lest, for our Sloth, he deprives us of that we make no use of,

*Thirdly, In working, fear God also, as he that will be the Judge and Rewarder of your Works for ever. You perform them unto him who is to pass Sentence upon them, and upon you for them; and will you then dare to do them slothfully and negligently? God will try every Mans Work with Fire, and will call every Action to a severe and strict account; every Mans Work shall be seen through and through, and then it shall be known who hath wrought the Works of God, and who hath fulfilled the Will of Satan; and the final Doom and irreversible Sentence shall then be pronounced according to Mens Works. God will, says the Apostle, render unto every Man according to his Works, to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for Glory and Immortality,*

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mortality,

*mortality, to them he will render Eternal Life; but to them that are contentious and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, he will render unto them Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul that doth Evil.* Now would you but thus fear God as an upright and impartial Judge, that will render unto every one according to his Works, How would this prevail with you so to work that at last you might be found of God in well doing, and receive the blessed Reward and Sentence of the diligent and faithful Servant, *To enter into your Master's joy?*

4. *Fourthly and Lastly, If you would work for Salvation successfully, then work speedily without delay, and constantly without cessation.*

1. *First, Work speedily without delay. Delays in all Affairs are dangerous, but in Soul Affairs usually they are damnable. For,*

1. *First, The longer you procrastinate and delay, the greater and more difficult will your Work be at last; Corruption will be grown more tuff, ill Humours*

mours will be grown more stubborn,  
your Heart will be more hardned, your  
Affections being more habituated will  
be more firmly engag'd to Sin, the *De-*  
*vil* will plead right to you by Prescri-  
ption, and it is hard keeping an Enemy  
out that hath had long Possession.

2.

*Secondly,* Consider what a desperate Folly it is to put off your Work till to Morrow; you are not sure that you shall live to see another Day. And oh ! what Hazards do those Men run , whose hopes of Heaven depend upon no better a bottom than their hopes of Life ; and whose eternal Salvation is subject to as many Casualties and Accidents, as their present Beings in this World are subject to. Mans Breath is in his Nostrils ; and yet how do Men suffer their Souls and their everlasting Happiness to depend upon nothing surer than their Breath, that Breath that every moment goes forth from them, and they know not whether ever it shall return to them again ?

But suppose your Life and Days should continue, and you should reach unto that time whereof you have boasted and promised to mind the concern-

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ments

ments of your Souls eternal Happiness in ; yet consider,

3. *Thirdly*, The Grace of God is not at your disposal ; for then either,
  1. *First*, The outward Call may cease or it may grow more faint and low ; you may not be so daily importun'd and solicited for Heaven as now you are : Ordinances and Opportunities may cease, or you for your contempt may be given over to a contempt and neglect of them.
  2. *Secondly*, The inward Dictates of your own Consciences, and the motions of the holy Spirit may cease : Conscience may be brib'd to a silence, and the holy Ghost may be commissionated to depart after this present opportunity, and never more may you have its Breathings and Movings upon your Hearts , if you do not now listen to them.
  3. *Thirdly*, If inward Motions do continue, are you sure after this moments refusal that you shall obtain that Grace from God that may make you willing to

to close with those Motions ? Leave not therefore the eternal Salvation of your precious and immortal Souls at such Hazards and Delays. *Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of Salvation; to day therefore if you will hear his voice, even while it is called to day, harden not your Hearts;* for this is the only Time and Season for working.

Secondly, *As you must work speedily without delay, so you must work constantly without cessation or intermission.* To stand still is to backslide, and to cease working is to undo and unravel what you have wrought. You are not like Men that row in a still Water, that tho' they slack their Course, yet they find themselves in the same station ; but you are to go against Tide and Stream ; the Tide of your own Corruptions, and the Stream of other Mens Actions and Examples ; and the least intermission here will be to your Loss; hereby you will be carried down the Tide much, yea and much Pains and Labour will scarce suffice to regain what a little Sloth hath lost. So much for this Text. The Lord make what hath been spoken profitable,  
*Amen,*

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THE  
ASSURANCE  
O F  
Heaven and Salvation,  
A Powerful  
M O T I V E  
T O  
Serve God with Fear :  
I N A  
DISCOURSE  
O N  
*HEBREWS* xii. 28.

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By *EZEKIEL HOPKINS*,  
Late Lord Bishop of *London-derry*.

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THE  
SOCIETY FOR  
THE PROPAGATION  
OF THE GOSPEL  
TO THE  
HEBREWS

DISCOURSES  
ON  
THE  
HISTORICAL  
TESTIMONY

FOR THE  
PROTESTANT  
CHURCH

BY

JOHN RICHARDSON,  
A MEMBER OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND.

THE  
ASSURANCE  
OF  
Heaven and Salvation,  
A Powerful  
MOTIVE  
TO  
Serve God With Fear.

Heb. 12. 28, 29.

Wherefore we having received a Kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

THIS Text contains in it a Doctrine, a Use, and a Motive: The Doctrine is, We have received a Kingdom that cannot be moved. The Use or Inference

ference from thence is this, *Therefore, let us serve God.* And the Motive to enforce this Exhortation is in these Words, *For our God is a consuming fire.*

10

I. In the first part, which is the Thesis or Position, *We have received a Kingdom that cannot be moved.* We must know, there is a twofold *Kingdom*; a *Kingdom of Grace*, set up in the Heart of a Saint where Christ alone reigns as sole Monarch and Sovereign; and a *Kingdom of Glory* prepared for us in the highest Heavens, where we shall reign as Kings with Christ for ever. If we take it in the former sense for the *Kingdom of Grace*, so the Apostle saith, *we have a Kingdom*, that is, we have it already in Possession. Christ hath established his Dominion over every Believer, and though he sits personally upon his Throne in Heaven, yet he rules in us by the Vice-gerency and Deputation of his Spirit that received Commission from him, and also by the Law of his Word enacted by it. If we understand it in the latter sense for the *Kingdom of Glory*, which seems most congruous to the Design of the Apostle,

Saints  
have a  
Kingdom  
in a four-  
fold Re-  
spect.

soonest

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so also, we have a Kingdom, and that in a fourfold sense.

First, By Grace giving us the earnest of it; by Faith realizing of it, by Hope embracing it, and by the Promises assuring of it.

I.

First, We have a Kingdom of Glory in the Earnest and first Fruits of it. The Comforts and Graces of the Spirit are very often in Scripture called the Earnest of our Inheritance: So you have it in 2 Cor. i. 22. and in Eph. i. 14. Now an Earnest you know is always part of the Bargain: So God to assure us that he is in earnest when he promiseth Heaven and Glory to us, hath already given us part of it in the Graces of his Spirit. Grace and Glory are one and the same thing in a different Print, in a smaller and a greater Letter; here we have Heaven in seminal Inchoation, hereafter we shall have it in consummate Perfection; Glory lies couched and compacted in Grace, as the beauty of a Flower lies couched and eclipsed in the Seed; therefore the Psalmist saith, Psal. 97. That Light is sown for the Righteous; that is, the Light of Joy Psal. 97. and

I.

Saints  
have a  
Kingdom  
in the  
first Fruits  
of it.

and of a future Life are in the Graces of Gods Children as in their Seed, and they shall certainly bud and sprout forth into perfect Happiness.

*Secondly, We have a Kingdom of*

**2.**

Faith real-  
lizeth it.

*Glory, because Faith realizeth things future, and gives an existence and being to things that are not.* This is that Grace to which nothing is past nor nothing future ; it contracts all things into present time, and makes all actually existent ; it draws Things that are at a great distance from it near to it self ; and thus the *Galatians* Faith represented the death of Christ so visibly to them, that the *Apostle* told them, *He was crucified among them*, Gal. 3. 1. It dives down into the gulf of future times, and fetcheth up things that as yet are not. It is much at one to a strong Faith to have Heaven or to believe it ; this Grace makes Heaven as really present as if it were already in Possession, and therefore it is called in *Heb. 11. 1.* *The evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for* ; it is the very being of things hoped for, the being of those things that as yet have no being.

*Gal. 3.1.*

*Thirdly,*

Thirdly, *We have a Kingdom as in  
the view of Faith, so also in the embraces  
of Hope.* And therefore Hope is called,  
*The Anchor of the Soul that entreth into  
that within the Vail,* Heb. 6. 19. that is, Heb. 6. 19.  
into Heaven ; it lays hold on all that  
Glory that is there laid up and kept in  
reversion for us. Hope is in it self a  
solid and substantial Possession, for it  
stirs up the same Affections, it excites  
the same Joy, Delight and Complacency  
as Fruition it self doth. It is the Taster  
of all our Comforts, and if they be but  
temporal, it not only tafts them, but  
sometimes quite devours them, and  
leaves us in suspence whether it be not  
better to be Expectants than Enjoyers.  
Heavenly Hope gives the same real con-  
tentment and satisfaction that antedates  
our Glory and puts us into the Possession  
of our Inheritance whilst we are yet in  
our Nonage, only it doth not spend and  
devour its Object before Hand as earthly  
Hope doth.

Fourthly, *We have a Kingdom of  
Glory, because God hath assured to us the  
possession of it by his immutable word of  
Promise.* And therefore it is called,  
*Eternal* 4.  
God hath  
assured  
them of it  
by Promise

*Eternal Life, which God that cannot lie hath promised,* Tit. 1. 2. Gods Word is as good Security as actual Possession. It is this Word that gives us Right and Title to it, and this Right we may well call ours. Hence we have it, and it is observable, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth shall be saved.* Here is assurance of Salvation for the future: But in

Joh. 3.18. *John 3. 18. there it is, He that believeth not, is condemned already.* He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not is condemned already ; why Unbelievers are no more actually condemned than Believers are actually saved ; only what God promiseth , or what God threateneth, it is all one whether he saith it is done or it shall be done; for Damnation is as sure to the one, and Salvation as certain to the other, as if they were already in their final Estate. So then *we have a Kingdom,* that is God, who cannot lie, hath promised it, and his Promise is as much as actual Possession it self.

The Saints  
Kingdom  
is immo-  
vable.

It follows in the Text this Kingdom is described to us in the *Text* to be *immoveable, we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved;* it is not like the Kingdoms of

of the Earth, that are all subject to Earthquakes and Commotions, but *we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved*. And if we understand this of the *Kingdom of Grace* in the Hearts of Believers, then the sense is, it can never be so moved as to be utterly removed; though it be shaken and battered, yet the *Foundation of God standeth sure*, having this *Seal* on it, *the Lord knoweth who are his*, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 2. 19. In 2 Tim. 2. deed as all Earthquakes are caused by <sup>19.</sup> some Vapours included in the Bowels of the Earth, so is there enough in us to cause Shakings and Earthquakes, there are those corrupt and sinful steems of Lusts that are still working and heaving in our Breasts; that were not Gods Truth, Wisdom and Power all engaged to keep and preserve us, we should be soon moved from our Standing, and overthrown. If we understand by it the *Kingdom of Glory*, that is certainly immovable, *we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved*; there we shall be free from the Temptations of *Satan*, from the Infirmities and Corruptions of the Flesh, from the mutability and fickleness of our own Wills, and have a blessed necessity imposed upon us to be for ever

ever holy, and to be for ever happy. So much for the *Thesis*, *We have a Kingdom that cannot be moved.*

2. *Secondly*, From the *Thesis* the *Apostle* proceeds to draw a practical *Inference*; wherein we may observe both what he exhorts us unto, and how we ought to do it. The Matter of the Duty to which he exhorts us, is, *Let us have Grace whereby we may serve God*. The manner how we ought to serve God is set down in one word and that is *acceptably*, *Let us serve God acceptably*; which that we may do, he directs us to the means, and that is, in all our serving of God let us address our selves to him, *with reverence and godly fear*; let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. I shall only, as I pass along, take a taste of this part of the *Text*, before I fix upon what I principally intend. The Word here translated *reverence* signifies shame-facedness or bashfulness, such as is commendable in Inferiors while they are in the presence of their Superiors; and it implies in it two Things. First, *Consciousness of our own Vileness and Unworthiness*. And then it implies; Secondly, *An over-awing sense of*

of another's excellency. For Modesty or Reverence consists in these two things, in low and debasing Thoughts of our selves, and in a high Esteem of others. Why now this the *Apostle* exhorts us to in the *Text* by the word Reverence; whence observe this, *That a due sense of our own vileness and of Gods glorious Majesty, is an excellent qualification in all our Services to make them acceptable.* Let us serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear.

Thirdly, You have in the *Text* the Motive whereby the *Apostle* inforceth this Exhortation, *For our God is a consuming Fire.* These Words are cited out of *Deut. 4. 19.* where *Moses*, to bring the *Israelites* from Idolatry, represents God to them as a jealous God and a consuming Fire. And here the *Apostle* makes use of them to compose Men into a holy Awe and Reverence of God in serving of him: Whence observe,

First, *That an irreverent and fearless Worship of the true God, provokes him and deserves his consuming Wrath, as well as the Idolatrous Worship of a false God.*

R Moses

*Moses* makes use of the same Words to deter the *Israelites* from Idolatry and worshipping of a false God, as the *Apostle* makes use of to excite us to a Reverence and worshipping of the true God.

2. Secondly, *Whereas it is said that our God is a consuming Fire*; observe, *That our peculiar Interest in God is no Encouragement to cast off our most awful fear of God*. Our God is a consuming Fire; though he hath laid down his Enmity against us, yet he hath not laid down his Sovereignty and Majesty over us. Indeed these two Expressions, *Our God, and a consuming Fire*, at first blush and glance seem to look strangely and wistly one upon another; but the *Holy Ghost* hath excellently tempered them. He is *our God*, this corrects that despairing Fear that otherwise would seize upon us, from the consideration of God as a consuming Fire: And he is a *consuming Fire* also, that corrects that presumptuous Irreverence, that else the consideration of our Interest in God might possibly embolden us unto.

You see now, from the Explication of these Words, what an excellent copious Portion of *Scripture* I have unfolded unto you, wherein indeed is contained the true Art and Method of serving of God acceptably. It is the Fear of God that quickens us to serve him, and this Fear of God is pressed upon us and wrought in us by two strong Principles, we have a Kingdom ; and what is strange too for those that have a Kingdom of God, our God is a consuming Fire, and therefore let us fear him. Now this is such a Principle that carnal Men are not apt to apprehend ; they say, if we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved, why then should we fear ? And if God be such a consuming Fire, why should we ever expect that Kingdom, since we are but as Stubble ? But our Apostle hath well conjoyned them together, and from that conjunction I shall raise and prosecute this one Proposition.

*That even those who stand highest in Doctrine, love and favour of God, and have the fullest assurance thereof, and of their interest in him as their God, ought notwithstanding to fear him as a Sin-revenging God, and a consuming Fire.*

In the prosecuting of this I shall shew you,

1. First, *What fear of God it is that Believer ought always to over-awe his Heart with.*
2. Secondly, *Upon what Grounds and Considerations he is thus to do it.* or *What there is in a reconciled God that may be a Ground and Motive to over-awe our Hearts with a fear of his Majesty.*

*What  
Fear is.*

First, *What fear of God it is that Believer ought to over-awe his Heart with.* Fear in general is described to be a Passion or an Affection of the Mind, arising from the apprehension of some great Evil difficultly avoidable: And as it is observed by some, it usually carries in it three Things.

1. There is in Fear a doubtfulness or uncertainty of the Event what it may prove, and this is always a Torment to the Mind.
2. There is in it a Terror that springs and ariseth from the greatness of the Evil apprehended and feared.
3. There

3. There is in it a careful flight and aversion of it.

1. There is in Fear a doubtfulness and Three things in  
uncertainty of the Event ; and this is a Torment , when a Man is wrackt in Fear.  
Suspense and Doubt what to expect , A doubtfulnes of whether or no the Vengeance of God will not fall heavy upon him , whether he be not Fuel on which this consuming Fire will for ever prey . Now this is not that Fear to which the Apostle in this Text exhorts us to serve God withal ; no , to Serve God with Reverence and godly Fear , is not to serve him with a doubtful , anxious and solicitous Fear of what the Event may prove ; nay , such a Fear as this is , is inconsistent with actual Assurance , and those who are perplexed with it cannot say we have a Kingdom , nor cannot fear their God as a consuming Fire . There may be a genuine , awful Fear of God as a consuming Fire , where there is not the least doubt remaining concerning our final State , where the Soul is fully assured that God will be to him not a Fire to consume him , but a Sun to cherish him for ever . I will give you one

**Heb. 4. 1.** or two remarkable *Scriptures* to this purpose. In *Heb. 4. 1.* *Let us fear,* says the *Apostle,* *lest a Promise being left us of entring into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* Here the *Apostle* quickens them to the exercise of Holiness, from the fear of falling short of Heaven; yea, though they had assurance by Gods Promise of it; lest a Promise being left us of entring into his Rest, yet you should fall short of it. And so the *Apostle* triumphs in his Assurance, in *2 Cor. 5. 1.* *We know that we have an House eternal in the Heavens;*

**2Cor. 5. 1.** and yet in *Verse 11.* he quickens himself to the discharge of his Ministerial Office, from the Fear of Gods Wrath, *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord we persuade Men.* Though he was assured of Glory, yet he quickens himself to the discharge of his Ministerial Function, by the Fear of Gods Wrath. So that it is evident there may be a Fear of Gods Wrath exciting unto Duty, where yet there is a full Assurance beyond all doubting and hesitation of escaping Wrath. So that this is not that Fear that the *Apostle* excites them that have assurance unto.

2. There is a Fear of Terrour, 2.  
a shivering in the Soul upon the apprehension of the greatness of the Evil feared, but avoided too; and this is consistent with full Assurance. Thus the Terror of past Dangers sometimes causeth as much Terror as if we were again to encounter with them. So when Believers look back upon that Wrath and fiery Indignation that they have narrowly escaped, upon that *Lake of Brimstone* that boils and burns behind them, wherein thousands of others are for ever swallowed up, this cannot but affect them with a holy Horror and Fear of Gods Wrath against Sinners, though they have full assurance of his Love.

3. There is also in Fear a flight and aversation from the Evil feared; and this also is consistent with full assurance. Noah had full assurance from the Promise of God for his preservation from the Deluge, and yet it is said, *That Noah being moved with fear built him an Ark.* Full assurance to escape Evil is far from hindring (as some calumniate it) the use of means to prevent that Evil; yea,

the assurance that we have to escape Hell and Wrath is of the greatest and most effectual influence to make us careful to use those means whereby we may escape it. See this in 2 Cor. 7. 1.

*2Co.7.1. Having these promises, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God. So in Tit. 2. 11, 12. The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, teacheth us to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. So in 1 John 3. 3. Every one that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself as God is pure.*

Thus you see what Fear it is the Apostle exhorts Believers to who have a Kingdom; not a Fear of perplexing Doubtfulness, but such as is consistent with their full assurance; that is, so to fear the Wrath of God, as to have our Hearts affected with Terrot at the greatness and insupportableness of that Wrath though they have escaped it, and to fear so, as to avoid all Sin, and all that exposeth to that Wrath; in these two Senses they that are assured that God is their God, ought to fear him as a consuming Fire.

*Secondly,*

2.

Secondly, Let us now see upon what Grounds and Considerations a Believer who is assured of Gods love and favour to him, ought yet to fear him as a consuming Fire.

Why Believers,  
who are  
assured of  
Gods love,  
ought to  
fear him  
as a con-  
suming  
Fire.

And First, *The consideration of that mighty and dreadful Power that God puts forth in the punishing and afflicting of the damned; this may strike Fear into the Hearts of those that are fully assured of Gods love and favour to them.* Such a Fear as this is, the *holy Angels* themselves have; tho' they are secured by Christ in that blessed State and Condition that they enjoy, yet to see God stripping and making bare his Arm, to lay on weighty strokes of everlasting Vengeance upon their Fellow *Angels* that are fallen, makes them to tremble and stand astonished at the Almighty Power of God; and this keeps them at a due distance in their Thoughts and Apprehensions of his dreadful Majesty. And should it not much more make us to tremble with an awful respect of the Power of God, to consider how he crusheth and breaks the Damned in Hell by his own Almighty Arm stretched

I.

Because of  
that Pow-  
er that he  
puts forth  
in punish-  
ing of the  
damned.

ed out in the full Power of his Wrath to their everlasting Destruction. It is from this Power of God that Christ himself enforceth the Fear of God, *Mat. 20. 28. Fear him who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell.* Though God should assure you that he would never destroy you in Hell, yet because he is able to do it, therefore you should fear him.

2. *Secondly, This Fear may arise in the Hearts of the Children of God, who are most assured of his Love, from the consideration of the Wrath and dreadful Severity of God, as well as of his Power.* If a Father corrects his Slave in his Wrath, this will cause Fear and Dread in the Son, though he knows that Wrath shall never fall upon him. So when a Child of God, who is assured of the tender love and favour of God to himself, yet when he sadly considers that Wrath and Indignation that is in God against the damned; when he sees his heavenly Father angry, though it be not against him; yet this must needs strike a reverential Fear and Aw into his Soul. Now this reverential Fear will remain for ever, *The Fear of the Lord endureth for ever;*

ever ; yea, when the Children of God shall be made for ever happy in Heaven, yet this Fear shall be then encreas'd, and not at all diminished ; the more they see of the Power of the Wrath and Severity of God executed upon the damned, the more they fear and reverence this powerful, this Sin-revenging God ; and this kind of Fear is no prejudice to their full Assurance and Joy, nor shall it be prejudicial to their compleat and perfect Happiness in Heaven.

Thirdly, *The consideration of the desert of Sin, should cause a holy Fear of God, even in those that are fully assured of his Love.* When a Child of God looks upon Sin, and sees what Wrath and Torment he hath deserved by it, tho' he be assured by the Testimony of the Spirit of God that he is pardoned, yet it cannot but fright him to consider that he should deserve so great Condemnation. As a *Malefactor* though he be pardoned, yet if he be present at the Execution of his Fellow Offenders, it must needs strike him with Fear and Horror, that he should be guilty of the same Crimes that they are to suffer such sharp and cruel Punishments for. What

3.  
Because of  
the desert  
of their  
Sins.

the

the Thief on the Cross said unto his Fellow Thief, *Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation?* The same may I say to Believers; Do not you fear God, seeing you deserve at least to be in the same Condemnation with those Wretches that lie frying and howling in Hell?

4. Fourthly, *Another Ground of fear is,*

*Because in that it is in it self possible that all this Wrath should be your Portion for ever, even you, who are most assured of Glory.*

*And is not this just cause of Fear, if not of Expectation yet at least of Terror?*

*Indeed as God hath been graciously pleased to bind himself in a Covenant of Grace and Mercy to you, so it is im-*

*possible that this Wrath should fall up-on you; but yet such a Supposition as*

*this is, is enough to cause Fear in the most assured Heart, to think that if*

*God had not engaged himself by Pro-mise to deliver him from that Wrath,*

*what then would have been his Condi-tion to all Eternity? Would not such*

*Thoughts as these make you tremble? Suppose a Man were fast chained to the top of some high Rock hanging over a bottomless Gulf, though he knew*

*and*

and was assured that he should not fall into it, being immoveably fasten'd there, yet when he looks down that deep and dangerous Precipice, and sees the Gulf foaming and raging under him, will not a cold Fear drill through his Heart to think, O! if I were not here fastned by a strong Chain to this immovable Rock, what would become of me? Even so Believers, you that are most assured to escape Hell, this is your Condition; you are fastned to the Rock of Ages by the unchangeable Promise of God that will ever hold you fast; but yet every time you look down into the bottomless Gulf that is under you, where thousands are swallowed up to all Eternity; doth not such a Thought as this is fright you to think? O! if I were not fastned to this immovable Rock, if God had not made an everlasting Covenant with me, ordered in all things and sure, I should also have been swallowed up with the rest of the World, and have gone down quick into Hell. Why, alas, we are all of us held over the Lake of Fire and Brimstone in the Hands of God; some he holds in the left Hand of his common Providence, and others of them he holds

holds in the right Hand of his special Grace ; those whom he holds only in the Hands of his Providence he lets fall and drop one after another into Hell, where they are swallowed up and lost eternally ; those that he holds in the Hands of his Grace, it is true it is impossible upon that Supposition that ever they should fall into Hell ; yet when they think, O if we were not upheld, yea, how possible it was that they should not have been upheld ; this apprehension must needs strike them with Fear and Terror , though not with a perplexing Doubtfulness concerning the safety of their Condition, yet with a doubtful apprehension of the possibility of what would have been their Condition if God had held them over Hell only, by the Hand of his common Providence.

5.  
Because  
they  
escape  
very nar-  
rowly.

Fifthly, Consider though you are assured that you shall escape this eternal Death, yet it will be a narrow escape, and that may cause Fear : It will be an escape with very much Labour and Difficulty, tho' you are held in the Hands of God, yet he leads you along to Heaven by the Gates of Hell , and this is sufficient to cause

cause Fear. Our way to Heaven is so strait, the Rubs in it so many, our Falls by them so frequent, our Enemies so potent, that though our assurance may make us not to fear but that in the end, we shall escape Hell; yet it will be high presumption for us not to fear how we may escape it. The *Apostle* brings in the Salvation of the Elect themselves with a scarcely, <sup>1 Pet. 4. 18.</sup> If the Righteous scarcely be saved. Why now this <sup>1 Pet. 4. 18.</sup> scarcely doth not imply that there is any uncertainty in the End, but only it implies the great difficulty in the means of obtaining of it. So then the End is certain, that is, a Believers Salvation from Hell, and that is just cause of rejoicing; but the Means are very difficult and laborious, and that is just cause of Fear.

Well then, briefly to apply it in one Word; *Though you are assured, through Faith, of the Pardon of your Sins, yet tremble at the thought of that Wrath and Hell that you have escaped.* It is observed that those are the fixed Stars that tremble most. So Christians, who are fixed immoveably in the unchangeable love of God, as Stars fixed to the Heavens in their

their Orbs, yet they are most of all in Trepidation and Trembling when they reflect upon themselves and think, that instead of being *Stars* in Heaven, they might have been *Firebrands* in Hell. Those to me are suspicious Professors that make a great blaze with their Joys in the apprehensions of their Right to Heaven, but never tremble under the apprehensions of their Deserts of Hell.

what  
there is in  
the confi-  
deration  
of God as  
our God,  
that may  
cause us  
to fear  
him.

Having shewed you upon what account God is to be feared as he is a consuming Fire, in the next place I shall shew you what there is in the consideration of God, as our God, that may enforce a holy Awe and Fear of him; and indeed if ever it was necessary to press Men to a due Fear and Awe of God it is so now, since on the one Hand the open Prophaneness of ungodly Men, and on the other Hand the pert Sauciness of some notional Professors, are apt to think that Communion with God consists in a familiar Rudeness, doth plainly testify to all the World that there is little Fear or Reverence of him in their Hearts. And now whilst I am shewing what reason there is that Gods dearest Children should fear him as a recon-

reconciled Father, let wicked Men in the mean while sadly consider with themselves, what great cause then they have to fear him who is their sworn Enemy; if God's Smiles are tempered with that Majesty that makes them awful, surely his Frowns then must needs carry in them an astonishing Terror, that makes them insupportable. We may observe how unexpectedly sometimes, from the Goodness and Mercy of God, that is, the sweetest and most natural attractive of Love, the Scripture draws an Inference to fear God, *Psal. 130. 4. There is forgiveness Psal. 130.  
with thee that thou mayest be feared.* Not only a Sin-revenging, but a Sin-pardoning God is here set before us as the Object of our Fear; these two Sister Graces Fear and Love are nourished in the Soul by the same Attribute, God's pardoning Mercy. The great Sinner in the Gospel is said to love much because much was forgiven her; and here much Fear as well as much Love, is the result and issue of God's pardoning Grace. And so you have it in *Hos. 3. 5. They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.* And in *Exod. 15. 11. Moses* describing the most glorious Attributes of God, tells

S us

us, *That he is glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises*; even then when we are to praise God for his Mercy, yet are we to fear him, as being fearful in Praises.

Neh. 1. 5. And therefore *Nehemiah*, in Nehem. 1. 5. praying to God, says he, *O Lord, the great and the terrible God*. Wherein? Is it in overwhelming Kingdoms, in bringing upon them decreed Destruction? Is it in the fierce execution of his Wrath against Sinners? No; says he, *O Lord, the terrible God, that keepest Covenant and Mercy for them that love him*. So again in Chap. 9. 32. *O God, the mighty and terrible God, that keepest Covenant and Mercy*. Let us now consider what there is in the Mercy and Favour of God, as he is a reconciled God unto us and in Covenant with us, that may justly render him to be the Object of our Fear.

I.  
That  
dreadful  
way that  
God took  
to mani-  
fest his  
mercy to  
us, may  
justly  
cause us to  
fear him.

First, *The consideration of that dreadful way and method that God took to manifest his Mercy towards us, is sufficient to affect our Hearts with Fear, though we stand fully possessed of his favour*. In Gen. 28. when God had made many gracious Promises all along that Chapter unto Jacob, of blessing of him, and keeping him

in all his ways, of multiplying his Seed as the dust of the Earth, you would think this was no terrible Thing ; and yet because God reveals this Mercy to him in an awful and amazing manner, a Gap is opened in Heaven, a bright Ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven ; God on the top of it, Angels on every Round of it ; though the Message was joyful, yet the strange kind of delivering of the Message makes Jacob cry out, *How dreadful is this place, it is no other than the Gate of Heaven !* The very Gate of Heaven becomes dreadful when it is represented in such a Majestical manner. But now the way that God took for his Mercy to arrive at us, is much more dreadful than any such Dream or Vision, and therefore we should be the more deeply affected with Fear and Trembling, even then when God speaks Peace and Pardon to us ; for if we consider either the Terms upon which he is become ours, or the way by which he discovereth himself to be ours ; both of them are full of Dread and Terror.

I. First, It cannot but strike our Hearts with Fear to reflect upon those dreadful Terms upon which God is contented, to be induced to become our God. His Mercy towards us is procured upon Terms of infinite Justice and Severity. Divine Vengeance arrests our Surety, and exacts from him the utmost Satisfaction; that Curse that would for ever have blasted and withered the Souls of all Mankind, seizeth upon Christ in all its malignity; that Wrath, some few Drops of which scalds the Damned in Hell, was given him to drink off in a full and overflowing Cup, *He did bear the chastisement of our Peace, and by his Stripes we are healed;* nor would God upon lower Terms have consented to a Reconciliation betwixt wretched Man and himself, than the precious Blood of his only Son. As of Old, Friendship betwixt two Persons was wont to be attested and sealed by a Sacrifice, as we find it both among *Heathen Authors,* and also in *Scripture;* an Instance of which we have of *Laban,* in *Gen. 31. 54.* where *Laban* and *Jacob,* returning to Amity, make a Ratification of it by a Sacrifice. So the Attomey that God made betwixt us and him-

himself is solemnized by a *Sacrifice*, even the Sacrifice of his own Son, *As a Lamb without spot or blemish*; in this Blood the Treaty betwixt God and Man stands ratified and confirmed. Oh! dreadful Mercy, that clasps and embraces us about with Arms died red in the Blood of Jesus Christ. But now is not this Ground enough to cause a holy Fear of God to seize upon every Soul that shall but seriously consider this sad *Tragedy* of pardoning Grace? If a *King* resolve to forgive a *Malefactor*, upon no other Terms than a Pardon writ with the last drop of the Heart-blood of his dearest Friend, who is there that is so hardened, that will not tremble at such a Mercy as this is, though it save him? So is the Case betwixt God and us; the Contents of the Pardon are joyful, but it is written all with the Blood of Jesus Christ reeking warm from his very Heart; and who then would not fear even a forgiving God?

2.

The way  
by which  
God disco-  
vers him-  
self to be  
ours, is  
dreadful,  
and may  
make us to  
fear him.

Secondly, Consider the way and method that God takes with us when he becomes our God, and that is most dreadful, and must needs make the most confirmed Heart to shake with Fear and Trembling. Indeed

God

God deals not with us in such Rigour as he dealt with Jesus Christ his Son ; but yet usually when he becomes our God , when he enters upon us as his Possession ; first, he shakes all the Foundations of our Hearts, breaths in Flames of Fire into our very Marrow, cramps our Consciences and unjoints our Souls ; O the Tempests and Storms of Wrath that God pours into a wounded Conscience, when it is under searching Convictions ! O the Smart and Anguish of a wounded Spirit, when God instead of Balm shall only chafe it with Brimstone ! And yet this is the common method that God useth to prepare Souls for himself ; he seems to arm himself in all his Terrors against them, singling them out to the Conflict, and when they give up themselves for lost, lying gasping for Hope scarcely, at length is administered some few reviving Comforts. It is with these as it was with the *Children of Israel* upon *Sinai*, first they were astonished with a confused noise of Thunder, the Air full of Lightning, the Mountains all on a Flame, and the Earth trembling under them , before they heard that comfortable Voice in *Exod. 20. 2.* *I am the Lord thy God.* So is

is it with convinced Sinners : God dis-  
chargeth his Threatnings against them  
that speak more dreadfully to them  
than a Voice of Thunder ; he speaks  
to them out of the midst of Flames, and  
every Word scorched up their Hearts ;  
and when they stand trembling and  
despairing , once at length they hear  
those reviving Words , *I am the Lord  
thy God.* What Hearts are there now  
that such a dreadful Mercy as this is,  
would not over-aw ? Those Discove-  
ries of Gods Love that break in upon  
the Soul in the midst of a doleful and  
gloomy Night of Despair and Despon-  
dency, work naturally a sweet kind of  
Terror and a shivering Joy ; and that's  
the first Consideration. The dreadful  
method that God takes to procure Mer-  
cy for us, even by the death of his Son,  
and to apply Mercy to us, even by the  
Terrors of a convinced Conscience, is a  
sufficient Ground to affect our Hearts Reaf. 2.  
with Fear , though we stand fully pos- We ought  
sess'd of his Favour. to fear  
God, tho'  
he be our  
God, be-  
cause it is  
possible to  
lose his  
Love and  
the Sense  
recon- of it.

Secondly , *Though God be our God,*  
*yet to consider that it is possible to lose his*  
*Favour and the Sense of it, this is enough*  
*to affect the Heart with a holy fear even of a*

Psal. 89.  
33.

reconciled God. It is true, God's Original and Fountain Love can never be dried up, *Whom he loves, he loves unto the End*, John 1. 13. *And my loving Kindness will I never utterly take away from him*, Psal. 89. 33. But yet the Streams of this Fountain Love may be very much obstructed from flowing freely down upon us; though we shall never again be Children of Wrath, yet we may be Children under Wrath; every presumptuous Sin we commit raiseth God's displeasure against us, he is angry with us upon every more notorious and known Sin we commit; and since then we are in danger every Day of falling into gross and foul Sins, and are kept only by his almighty and free Grace from the worl<sup>t</sup>, what caufe have we to fear, lest we forfeit his Favor and turn his Displeasure against us? Yea again, though we should be preserved from Sin and continue in his Love, yet we cannot assure our selves that we shall continue in the Sense and comfortable Apprehension of it: Comfort is most arbitrary and at God's free Dispose, neither hath he ingaged himself to bestow it upon any by any absolute Promise; though now his *Lamp shined clearly*

clearly upon thy *Tabernacle* and thou joycest in his Smiles, yet how quickly may he wrap thee up in a dark Night of Deser<sup>tion</sup>, and turn all thy *Songs* into *Mourning*? Thou, therefore, that art now assured that God is thy God, fear lest ere long thou mayest not think him to be so; certain thou art he is so now, yet before it be long, possibly, through thy Miscarriage, thou mayest not think him to be so, and it is all one as to Comfort or Discomfort, whether God be thy God or not, if thou dost not apprehend him to be so, and therefore fear him.

Thirdly, Consider every Frown and Reaf. 3.  
Stroke toucheth to the Quick, that cometh from a reconciled God and a loving Father, and therefore the rather fear because he is thy God. Every little Blow from a Father strikes deeper and causeth more Smart than greater Blows from other Persons; others strike the Body, but when a loving Father strikes, he wounds the Heart: So is it here; the nearness of the Relation betwixt God and us, puts an Anguish and Sting into every Correction. As the Psalmist speaks in his own Case, *Psal. 55. 12.*  
*It*

Why we  
should fear  
God, be-  
cause eve-  
ry Frown  
of our God  
touches to  
the quick.

*It was not an Enemy that reproached me, neither was it he that hated me, then I could have born it ; but it was thou a Friend, mine Equal , my Guide , and mine Acquaintance.* These are sad Accents; and so is it here: The Blood of a Sin-revenging God may indeed break the Back, but the Blows of a gracious and reconciled Father break the Heart. Fear therefore, lest through some Miscarriage of thine (and such Miscarriages thou art every Day guilty of) thou shouldest provoke thy God to lay some heavy Stroke upon thee, which will be the more smart from the aggravation that provoked Love puts upon it. And thus you see now in these three Particulars , what ground there is from the consideration of God as our God, to enforce a holy Fear of his divine Majesty upon our Hearts. He is our God, therefore fear him because the way that he became ours is most dreadful ; he is our God as yet, fear lest we may not apprehend him so long ; he is our God therefore fear him, because every Stroke and Frown from a God in Covenant, comes with an aggravated smart and stinging.

Why

Why now this holy Fear, as it is no  
Enemy to full assurance, as I have shew-  
ed you, so neither,

Secondly, *Is it any way prejudicial to a  
most ardent love of God.* Filial Love 2.  
Holy Fear  
is not con-  
trary to  
the Love  
of God.  
and Filial Fear are two Twins; but  
not such as *Jacob* and *Esau*, that  
strive to supplant one another. The  
pure Flame of divine and heavenly  
Love is like other Flames, the higher it  
mounts the more it vibrates and trem-  
bles. Indeed St. John tells us, *1 John 1 Joh. 4.  
4.18. That perfect Love casteth out Fear.* 18.  
opened.  
It should seem then that all Fear of God  
is swallowed up in those Hearts that  
are once brought into an holy Love.  
But the *Apostle* doth very well explain  
himself in the reason that he gives of  
this Assertion in the next Words, *Per-  
fect Love casteth out Fear, because Fear  
hath Torment in it.* Hence therefore we  
may distinguish of a twofold fear of  
God. The one is tormenting, causing  
unquiet rollings and estuations in the  
Heart, in a sad suspense of what our  
future and eternal State may prove, and  
this is flavish. Now this Fear perfect  
Love casteth out and expells; for where  
divine

divine Love is perfected in the Soul, there are no more such Suspences, Hesitations and Doubtings, what will become of it to Eternity. Now by *perfect Love* may be meant, either that state of Perfection to which we shall attain in Glory, where our whole Work to all Eternity shall be to love and please God, or else that Perfection that consists in its Sincerity in this Life: If we take it for that perfection of Love that shall for ever burn in our Hearts when we our selves shall be made perfect, so it is certain it will cast out all tormenting Fears; for certainly if in Heaven Hope it self shall be abolished, much more shall Fear be abolished, for there every Saint shall have much more than a full assurance, even a full fruition of Glory, and they shall know themselves to be for ever confirmed in that blessed state which shall prevent *all doubts* and fears. If we understand it of that perfection of Love that we may attain to in this Life, so also the strong and vigorous actings of Love to God, casteth out all tormenting Fears. It is not possible that that Soul that actually loves God with a vigorous and most ardent Affection, should at the same time

be rack'd with distracting fears of Hell and Damnation ; for it is the sense of God's Love unto the Soul that draws from it reciprocal Love again unto God. *We love him,* says the Apostle, *because he first loved us.* That is, as strong as our apprehensions are of God's Love to us, so strong will our Love be in its returns to God again. Water riseth naturally as high as its Spring ; wherefore the assurance of God's Love being the Spring from whence our Love flows, such as is our Love, such will be our assurance also : If then our Love be strong in its actings it must needs cast out Fear, because it flows from that assurance with which tormenting Fear is utterly inconsistent. But then there is another kind of Fear that is not tormenting , and that is an awful frame of Heart struck with reverential apprehensions of God's infinite Majesty, and our own vileness and unworthiness ; and this perfect Love doth not cast out, but perfects, this awful, sedate, calm fear of God. The *Angels* and the glorified Saints in Heaven, whose Love is so perfect that it can neither admit of an increase or abatement , yet they stand in awe and fear of the terrible Majesty of the

the great God; the same infinit Excellencies of the divine Nature that attract their Love, doth also excite their Fear. See how the Prophet makes this an Argument to fear God, *Jer. 10. 7.* *Who would not fear thee, O King of Saints? For, said he, in all the Earth there is none like unto thee.* One would rather think Gods unparallel Excellencies and Perfections should be a Motive to Love; who would not love thee, O King of Saints, since there is none in all the Earth like thee? Yea, but filial Fear and filial Love are of so near a kind and cognition, that they may well be enforced by one and the same Argument. *Who would not fear thee? for in all the Earth there is none like thee.* This is the Excellency of divine Love, it is an attractive of Love, and it is an excitement unto Fear. Well then, though we have no chilling Fear of a hot and scorching Hell, yet let us have an awful, reverential Fear of the glorious God, whose Excellencies are such as cannot be matched, nor scarcely imitable by any in Heaven or in Earth.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *The Fear of God is not contrary to that free Spirit of Adoption which we receive in our first Conversion.* It may perhaps seem to some that the Apostle opposeth them in Rom. 8. 15. You have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to the Spirit of Fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, where- by you cry *Abba, Father.*

To this I Answer; That by the Spirit of Bondage here, the Apostle means the legal Work of the holy Ghost in Conviction that is preparatory to Conversion, which Work usually is accompanied with dreadful Terrors, apprehending God not as a reconciled Father but as an incensed and severe Judge; why now says the Apostle, You have not received this Spirit of Bondage again thus to fear; this is not that Fear that the consideration of God, as your God and reconciled Father excited to you, this is not that Fear that the Apostle exhorts Christians unto, but an awful, reverential Fear of God, whereby we should stand in awe of his dread Majesty, so as to be preserved from whatever may be an offence to his Purity; and if in any Night of Deser-  
tion it should happen that the Hearts of true Believers should be overwhelm-  
ed with dismal Fears, apprehending  
God

3.

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Fear of

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to the Spi-

rit of

Adoption.

God as enraged and incensed against them, standing in doubt of the goodness of their spiritual Condition; if this seize upon them after they have had the *Spirit of Adoption*, let them know this *Fear* is not from a Work of the Holy Ghost in them; they have not received the *Spirit of Bondage* again so to fear; it is not a Work of the Holy Ghost to excite in them doubts and fears of their spiritual Condition, after they have once had assurance of the goodness thereof, but it ariseth either from some Ignorance, or from some Sin that they have committed, that interposeth betwixt them and the clear sight of the discoveries of God's Love.

Now for the better understanding of this place, because I judge it pertinent to my present purpose, I shall open it to you somewhat largely in these following Particulars.

I.  
The Work  
of Con-  
version is  
usually  
carried on  
by legal  
Fears and  
Terrors.

First, *The preparatory Work of Conversion is usually carried on in the Soul by legal Fears and Terrors.* I call that a legal Fear that is wrought in the Soul by the Dread-Threatnings and Denunciations of the Law. The Law, if we take

take it in its native Rigour, without the merciful qualification of Gospel-grace, thunder'd out nothing but Execrations, Wrath and Vengeance against every Transgressor of it, representing God armed also with his almighty Power to destroy them; this is that Glass that shew'd them their old Sins in most ugly Shapes; now they see them stare ghastly upon their Consciences, that before allured them; the Scene is quite changed, and there are nothing but dreadful Apparitions of Death and Hell fleeting now before them, Hell belsh'd in their very Faces, God brandish'd his flaming Sword over them ready to reeve their Hearts asunder; they that lately were secure and fearless, now stand quaking under the fearful expectations of that fiery Wrath and Indignation, that they neither have hope to escape, nor yet have they Strength or Patience to endure. This is that *legal Fear* that the Curse and Threatnings of the Law, when set home in their full acrimony, work in the Hearts of convinced Sinners.

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Secondly,

2. Slavish Fear engenders unto Bondage. Secondly, *This legal Fear is slavish, and engenders unto Bondage.* There is Bondage under the reigning Power of Sin, and there is a Bondage under the terrifying Power of Sin: The former makes a Man a Slave unto the Devil, and the latter makes a Man a Slave unto God: And such Slaves are all convinced Sinners that have not yet arrived to the free and filial *Spirit of Adoption*, but are kept under Bondage under the Wrath of God, and manacled in the Fetters of their own Fears. So saith the Apostle, *Heb. 2. 15. To deliver them, who through fear of Death, and of Hell that follows after it, were all their Lifetime subject unto Bondage.*

3. Slavish Fear is wrought in the Soul by the Spirit.

Thirdly, *This slavish Fear is wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, though it be slavish;* for it is his Office to convince as well as to comfort, and to cast down by the Terrors of the Law as well as to raise up by the Promises of the Gospel: In *John 16. 8. He shall convince the World of Sin;* and therefore it is said in this place, *Rom. 8. 15. We have Rom. 8. 15 not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear,* implying that those Terrors that seize

seize upon the Conscience are the Work of the Holy Ghost. We bring our selves into Bondage under Sin, and he brings us into Bondage under Fear. If therefore at any time, thou who art a secure Sinner, art suddenly surprized with fearful and trembling Thoughts concerning thy present state of Sin and thy future state of Wrath, beware thou listen not to any that would persuade thee it is nothing but a Fit of *Melancholy* or a Temptation of *Satan*, to drive thee to Despair, but know assuredly thy Conscience is now under the Hand of the Holy Ghost himself, he raiseth those Tempests of Fear in thee; and as usually it is fatal to divert and hush them, so is it no less than ignorant Blasphemy, to impute his Works to Melancholy, or to the Temptations of Satan.

Fourthly, *When the Soul is prepared for the Work of Grace by the Work of Conviction, when it is prepared for Comfort by the Work of Humiliation, the same Spirit that was before a Spirit of Bondage, becomes now a Spirit of Adoption*; that is, <sup>When the Spirithath been aspi-</sup> <sup>dage, it be-</sup> <sup>rit of Bon-</sup> <sup>Adoption.</sup> *the love and favour of God, and enables*

enables us, through divine Light beaming in upon our Consciences, to behold him as a gracious and a reconciled Father, whom before we trembled at as a stern and terrible Judge. The same Wind that in a raging Storm tosseth the Sea too and fro in restless Heaps, in a Calm doth only gently move and fan it with pleasing Purles. So is it here; that Spirit of God that in Conviction raiseth a Tempest in the Conscience, afterwards the same Spirit breaths forth a sweet Calm of Peace and Comfort upon it: The same Spirit that before was a *Spirit of Bondage*, when the Soul is sufficiently thereby prepared for Grace, becomes a *Spirit of Adoption*. This is that Spirit of Adoption that is here spoken of, and is called so, because it witnesseth with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God by Adoption. God hath but one Son by eternal Generation, and that is Jesus Christ, called therefore, *The only begotten of the Father*, John 1. 14. He hath many Sons by Creation, even all Mankind; so Adam is called *The Son of God*, Luke 3. 38. He hath many Sons also by Adoption, even all that are effectually called according to the purpose of his Grace;

all

all that are sanctified, who are of Strangers made *Heirs of God*, and *Co-heirs with Jesus Christ* himself, who is the natural Son of God, as it is *Rom. 8. 17.* Now because it is the Work of the *Holy Ghost* to testify to us this our great Privilege, that we are enrolled in the Family of Heaven and become the Children of God, therefore he is called the *Spirit of Adoption*; that is, the Spirit that witnesseth to us our *Adoption*.

Fifthly, *To whom the Spirit hath once been a Spirit of Adoption, it never more becomes to them a Spirit of Bondage and Fear*: That is, it never again proclaims War, after it hath spoken Peace; it never represents God as an enraged Enemy, after it hath represented him as a reconciled Father. It is true, the Spirit of God always keeps up his convincing Office in the Soul of the most assured Saint; it convinceth them of Sin, and of Wrath due to them for Sin. But now there is a twofold Conviction, there is a Conviction of the Evil of particular Actions, and there is a Conviction of the Evil of our State and Condition: Why now, though upon particular Miscarriages of Gods Children,

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Spirit  
hath once  
been a Spi-  
rit of Ado-  
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Bondage.

A two-  
fold Con-  
viction of  
Sin.

the Holy Ghost secretly smited their Consciences, shewing them the Guilt and Evil of their Sins, thereby bringing them to Repentance and a godly Sorrow ; yet the Holy Ghost never again testified to them, that they are in a graceless, unregenerate and sinful Estate and Condition, and in a State of Wrath and Condemnation ; it brings them to a deep Humiliation, by convincing them of the Evil of their Actions, but it never brings them into legal Terrors, by convincing them of a sinful State ; neither indeed can it be so, for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth ; and to witness that we are yet Children of Wrath, who are indeed the adopted Children of God, this were a false Testimony, and therefore utterly abhorred by the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of Truth : Doth the same Fountain send forth sweet Water and bitter ? Doth there proceed from one and the same Mouth, Blessings and Curses ? Certainly the same Spirit that hath once pronounced us to be in the Love and Favour of God, never after pronounceth us to be Cursed, and under the Wrath of God.

But you will say, Have not the best of Object, God's Children sometimes concluded themselves to be reprobated and cast away? Have they not lain under sad and fearful apprehensions of God's Wrath? Have not some of them, who formerly walked in the Light of God's Countenance and flourished in their Assurance, yet afterwards have been so defected, that they would not entertain any comfort or hopes of Mercy and Salvation?

To this I Answer; It is true, it may Answ. indeed so happen that those Saints, whose Joys and Comforts are at one time fresh and verdent, at another time wither and drop off, so that they look upon themselves as rotten Trees, destined to make Fuel for Hell. Whence proceeds this? It is not from the Spirit of God; but as carnal Men are apt to mistake the first Work of Conviction for Melancholy or for Temptation, so this really proceeds from one of these two Causes. When the Children of God, after full assurance, come again not only to entertain Doubts of their Condition, but also to despair of themselves, looking on themselves as Persons

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that God hath singled out to Destruction ; this proceeds not from the *Holy Ghost*, but from Melancholy or Temptation. Sometimes natural Melancholy obstructs the sense of divine Comfort : As it is in clear Water, when it is still and transparent the Sun shines to the very bottom , but if you stir the Mud, presently it grows so thick that no Light can pierce into it : So is it with the Children of God, though their apprehensions of God's Love be as clear and transparent sometimes as the very Air that the *Angels* and *glorified Saints* breath in , in Heaven, yet if once the muddy Humor of Melancholy stirs, they become dark, so that no Light or Ray of Comfort can break in to the deserted Soul. And then sometimes the *Devil* causeth these Tragedies by his Temptations, that so, if it were possible, he might drive them to Dispair ; he hated their Graces, he envies their Comforts, and therefore he would persuade them that all their former Joys were but Delusions, proud Dreams and presumptuous Fansies, and that they are still in the *Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity*; and by such Suggestions as these are, when he cannot hinder the Work

of

of Grace, he strives what he can to hinder the Sense of Comfort. When, therefore, those that have once rejoiced under the comfortable Persuasions of God's Love to them, the *Holy Ghost* witnessing himself to them to be a *Spirit of Adoption*, by being in them a Spirit of Sanctification; if they now find themselves under the Bondage of *legal Fears and Terrors* and slavish Dejections, looking upon themselves as under the revenging Wrath of God, and as Persons devoted to Destruction; let them know, such Fears proceed not from the Convictions of the Spirit of God, who hath been a Spirit of Adoption, but it proceeds from the Delusions of Satan; for those that once receive the *Spirit of Adoption*, never receive the *Spirit of Bondage* again to fear; that is, to fear with a slavish, tormenting Fear.

Sixthly, *A reverential, filial Fear of God, may and ought to possess our Souls,* We ought while the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of Adoption, is, by the clearest Evidences, actually witnessing our Sonship to us. Let Men boast what they will of their high Gospel-attainments, yet certainly they have

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to fear  
God, tho'  
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our God.

have not the genuine Disposition of God's Children, whose Love to him is not mingled with Fear, and whose Fear of him is not encreased by their Love. Love! it is the Gage and Measure of all our Affections; and according to the proportion of our Love to God, such will be our Fear; that is, the more we love God, the more we shall fear his Displeasure and the Loss of his Favour. It is in vain for us to pretend love to God as our Father, unless we fear him also as our Lord and Master. Christ who was *his only begotten Son*, and certainly had much more clear assurance of the love and favour of God, than any *adopted Sons* can possibly have, yet the Scripture ascribes an holy, awful, reverential Fear of God even unto him; *Heb. 5. 7. When he offered up Prayers with strong Cries and Tears, and was heard in that he feared;* it may be render'd, he was heard because of his godly Fear. So in *Isa. 11. 2. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord,* speaking of Christ. If therefore he feared God, who was himself to be feared as God equal to him and his eternal Son, how much more ought we

to

to fear the great God, who are, as it were, but Up-starts in the Family of Heaven; we wretched and forlorn Out-casts, that were but lately raked out of the Dunghil, and by meer Pity taken up into the Bosom of God, and nurtured as his Children? And thus you see the Fear of God is not in the least contrary to the free Spirit of Adoption.

Fourthly, *An awful Fear of God is no Impediment to a holy Rejoycing.* Indeed A Fear of God is no Impedi-ment to a holy Re-joycing in God. 4.  
slavish Fear damps all true Joy. Those that Fear and expect the Revengings of God cannot have any true Joy; they may have a kind of mad Jollity that spends it self in Noise and Tumults, that may roar out Songs of Mirth, only to drown the loud Roarings of their own Consciences. Such as these are like your new Liquor that works over into Foam and Froth, when the bottom is thick and troubl'd. So in this false Joy, the Countenance runs over with Laughter, when yet the Heart is brim full of the Wrath of God; of such the wise Man speaks, *Prov. 14. 13. Even in Laughter Prov. 14. the Heart is sorrowful.* But now a filial<sup>13.</sup> fear of God, puts no check at all upon our

our holy Rejoycing in him ; spiritual Joy is not of that flashy Nature, but it is a sober and a severe Grace, it is Joy mixed with Fear ; and because of the mixture of these two together, the fear of God with joy in the Lord, therefore we find these two are promiscuously ascribed each to other ; so in *Isa. 60. 5.* *Their Hearts shall fear and be enlarged.* You know it is the property of Joy to extend and enlarge the Heart ; Fear contracts and draws it together, but here Fear is said to dilate the Heart, to denote to us, that a Christians Fear is always conjoyned and mingled together with his Joy. And so on the other Hand it is said, *Psal. 2. 11. Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling.* Fear with Trembling is more proper and natural ; but because of the mixture of these two Graces in the Heart of a Christian, therefore the *Holy Ghost* thus expresseth it, *Rejoyce with Trembling* ; for great Joys as well as great Fears, cause a kind of trembling and fluttering in the Heart : As it was with the two Women, whom the *Angels* assured of Christ's Resurrection, *Mat. 28. 8.* *They departed from the Sepulchre with Fear and great Joy.* So is it with those Christians,

ans, who by the Eye of Faith looking upon the Death and into the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ, are assured that he is risen for their Justification, cannot but have their Hearts filled with a quaking and a fearful Joy: Even a Christians strong Praises are breathed out with a shaking and a trembling Voice; so that godly Fear is no Impediment to a holy and a severe Rejoycing in God as our Saviour.

Fifthly, *Godly Fear lays no check upon our holy freedom and boldness with God.* 5.  
God hath established a Throne of Grace whereon he sets, and unto which he invites his People to approach with a becoming Confidence, *Heb. 4. 16. Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace.*

As that Emperor counted his Clemency disparaged when any delivered a Petition to him with a shaking Hand, as though he doubted of his Favour; so God loves when we make our Addresses to him, that we should do it with full assurance of Faith, nothing doubting of acceptance with him, and of an Answer from him. He that asks timorously, only begs a Denial from God. But yet that this boldnes may not degenerate

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generate into rudeness and irreverence, he requires that our Freedom with him be tempered with an awful Fear of him. We must come in all Humility and Prostration of Soul, with broken Hearts and bended Knees, to touch that golden Scepter that he holds forth to us.

Thus you see in these five Things, how consistent the Grace of Fear is with other Graces of the Spirit; it is no Impediment to a full Assurance, its no Hinderance to Love, its no Impediment to a Spirit of Adoption, nor to a holy Rejoycing, no, nor to a holy Boldness.

wherein  
slavish and  
filial Fear  
differ.

In their  
Concomi-  
tants and  
in their  
Effects.

I.  
In their  
Concomi-  
tants.

Now because I have made frequent mention of *filial* and *slavish* Fear, that you may the better understand what each of these means, I shall briefly give you the difference betwixt them. Now they differ in their Concomitants, and in their Effects.

Firſt, *Slavish* Fear hath always two dreadful Concomitants; and they are *Dispair*, and *Hatred or Enmity* against God.

I. *In slavish Fear there is always some degree of Dispair:* Now this slavish Fear is joined with dreadful expectations of Wrath. A Slave that hath committed a Fault, expects no other than to be punished for it without Mercy. So those that lie under this slavish Fear, apprehend and account of God no otherwise than the slothful Servant, as a severe Lord and a cruel Tyrant, that will exact Punishment from them to the utmost of their Deserts; they expect no other but that certainly God's Wrath will kindle upon them and burn them eternally, and this makes them live as the *Apostle* speaks in *Heb. 10. 27.* *In certain fearful Expectations of Wrath and Indignation, that shall devour them as Adversaries.* This kind of horrid Fear I doubt not but is common to most wicked Men; and though they brave it out, and most of them speak high Matters of their hopes of Heaven and Salvation, yet at the same time their own Hearts and Consciences tell them sad and misgiving Stories of Hell and everlasting Wrath. But now a true and filial Fear of God looks at the Wrath of God with Dread and Terror, but not with

In slavish  
Fear there  
is always  
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with Expectation ; there's the Difference. *Slavish Fear* looks upon the Wrath of God, and expects it ; *Filial Fear* looks upon it as due, but not with Expectations that it should be inflicted upon it.

2.  
Slavish  
Fear is  
accompa-  
nied with  
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God.

*Slavish Fear* is always accompanied with some degree of Enmity and Hatred against God. It is natural for us to hate those that we fear with a slavish Fear. He that thinks God will certainly punish him, must out of self-love needs be provoked to hate God : Hence is it that the Soul that lies under the Terrors of the Law, wisheth that there was no such thing as Hell and eternal Damnation, nay, that there was no God to inflict this upon it : This proceeds from this *slavish Fear* of God. But now a reverent Fear of God is joined with a holy Love, as Children who love their Parents, but yet stand in awe of them. So much for the Concomitants of this Fear.

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fects.

*Secondly*, For their Effects ; and that both as to Sin, and as to Duty.

1. As

1. As to Sin ; *Slavish Fear dreads nothing but Hell and Punishment, but godly Fear dreads Sin it self:* The one fears only to burn, the other fears for to sin. As *Austin* saith well, *He fears Hell only who fears not to sin, but fears to burn; but he fears to sin, who hates sin as he would hate Hell.*

2. *Slavish Fear usually restrains only from external, and those also the more gross and notorious Acts of sin; but holy Fear over-awes the Heart from inward and secret Sins, yea, from the least Sins whatsoever.*

And then as for Duty also, in two Things briefly.

As to Duty

First, *A slavish Fear of God makes Men to consult how they may fly from God:* As *Adam* did; when he had brought Guilt upon his Conscience by his Fall, he hides himself from God in the Garden. Guilt loves not the presence of its Judge: But godly Fear is still exciting the Soul to approach near to God in Duty. And therefore *David* saith, *Psal. 5. 7. In thy Fear will I worship towards*

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*wards thy holy Temple.* The Fear of God encourageth the Soul in the performance of Duty.

2. Secondly, *Slavish Fear contents it self with external Performances.* Just so much as will serve the turn, to satisfie the Demands of Conscience; but holy Fear sanctifies the Lord in Duty as well as satisfies Conscience: And therefore you have it in Isa. 8. 13. *Sanctify the Lord of Host in your Hearts, and let him be your Fear and your Dread.* Thus much briefly for the difference betwixt filial and slavish Fear.

Use I. I come now to the Application: And the first Use shall be by way of Corollary. If the consideration of God as a consuming Fire ought to affect the most assured Christian with a holy Fear and Dread of God, how much more then may it shrink and shrivel up the Hearts of ungodly Sinners? If it make God's own Children to tremble to look into Hell, and to see those heaps of miserable Wretches that are there burning for ever, shall it not much more make you to tremble, who are liable every moment to be bound in Bundles, and to be cast in to burn among them?

When

When a *City* is on Fire it is terrible to see it rage afar off, to see it spue up Smoak and Flames, tho' at a distance, and he that is not affected with it is Inhuman; but he is more than stupid, that doth not tremble to see it devour whole Streets before it, ruining all till it approach near his own Dwelling: Why, Sirs, this consuming Fire hath already seized upon Millions of others, and burnt them down into the lowest Hell: Do not you hear *Dives*, in the *Gospel*, cry *Fire, Fire?* The greatest part of the World is already burnt down; and if their Case makes not your Hearts to shake and tremble, yet methinks your own should: This Fire is catching and kindling upon your Souls, and the next moment may make you Brands in Hell. But, alas! what hope is there to affright Men that are fast asleep? Such a dead Security hath seized upon the Hearts of most, that it is almost impossible to rouze them, and but little hope but that they will be burnt in this their Sleep: Yet if it may be possible to awaken you, consider,

I.  
God's  
Wrath a-  
gainst Sin-  
ners,  
makes  
him terri-  
ble to his  
Saints.

First, *That it is only God's Wrath against Sinners, that makes him terrible to his Saints*: They are afraid of that fiery Indignation that burned against the Wicked; and shall not the Wicked then much more be afraid, that must themselves feel it? *Our God*, says the Apostle, *is a consuming Fire*; but to whom is he such a consuming Fire? Not to those certainly whose God he is; *He shall burn up all the Wicked of the Earth as Stubble*. That God doth not always stile himself a gracious God and a reconciled Father, but sometimes puts on dreadful Titles, his Children owe it to the Wicked; against them alone it is that he arrays himself with all his Terrors: As a Father may affright his Children, by putting on those Arms that he useth only against his Enemies; So God daunts his own Children by appearing in his dread Power, his severe Justice and consuming Wrath; but how much more may it apeal his Enemies, upon whom he intends to execute all this in the utmost rigour and extremity?

Secondly,

Secondly, Another Consideration that  
may make the most secure Sinner to tremble  
is this, That God himself will be the imme-  
diat<sup>e</sup> Inflicter of their Punishments. They

God him-  
self is this  
consuming  
Fire.

shall be consumed by Fire, and offer'd  
up as a burnt Sacrifice to the Wrath  
and Justice of God ; and that Fire that  
shall for ever burn them is God him-  
self, God is a consuming Fire. I do  
not deny but that there is another ma-  
terial Fire prepared and blown up in  
Hell for the punishment of the Dam-  
ned, but certainly their most subtle and  
exquisite Torture shall be from God  
himself, who is this consuming Fire.  
This Wrath of God, which shall for  
ever burn and enflame the Souls of the  
Damned, is called *fiery Indignation*, Heb. 10.

Heb. 10. 17. That Fire that destroyed

Nadab and Abihu was but a Type of  
this, and the Antitype infinitely tran-  
scends the Type ; the dreadfulnes<sup>s</sup> of  
their temporal Death by Fire was but a  
faint resemblance of the Death of the  
Soul ; what Fire must that be, of which  
that extraordinary Fire that fell down  
from Heaven it self, was but a meer  
Shadow ? As the Fire that came down  
upon Elijah's Sacrifice did lick up the

Water that was poured into the Trenches; so this fiery *Indignation of God* shall, in Hell, melt down the Damned, as it were, and then lick up their very Spirits and Souls. It is said,  
Psal. 194.  
4. Psal. 104. 4. That God makes his Angels a flaming Fire. It is the nearest representation that is given of the Angelical Nature, that abounds both in subtlety and force; *He makes his Angels a flaming Fire.* Now when Christ saith, *Go into those flames of Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels;* why the Devils themselves are Flames of Fire, and what Fire can be more piercing than themselves, who have power over Fire? Yet there is a greater Fire than they, God is a consuming Fire, a Fire so infinitely scorching as will burn and torment even Fire it self. It would be unspeakable, terrible Wrath in God, if he should make use of his Creatures for the punishment of the Damned. Who could bear it, if God should only keep a Man living for ever in the midst of a Furnace, though but of a gross, earthly Fire and Flames? Or, if God should bind a Man Hand and Foot, and cast him into a deep Pit full of *Toads, Adders and Scorpions,* and there let him lie for

for ever? God knows all the several Stings that are in his Creatures, and he can take out of them the most sharp and piercing Ingredients; the sharpness of the Sword, the inflammations of Poisons, the scorchings of Fire, the anguish of Pains, the faintness of Diseases, and of all these can make a most tormenting Composition; and if he should make use of this Composition, what intolerable Anguish would this cause? If then Creatures can cause such Torture, oh! what a dreadful thing is it to fall into the Hands of God himself? When God conveys his Wrath by Creatures, it must needs lose infinitely in the very conveyance of it: It is but as if a *Giant* should strike one with a *Straw* or a *Feather*; so when God takes up one Creature to strike another with, that Blow can be but weak; and yet how terrible are those weak Blows to us? What will it be then, when God shall immediately crush us by the unrebated Force of his own Almighty Arm? You, therefore, that persevere in Sin and in Security too, consider who you have to deal with, not with Creatures but with God himself; and do you not fear that uncreated Fire that can wrap

you up in the Flames of his essential Wrath, and burn you for ever? *Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be strong,* says God, *in the day that I shall deal with thee?* The very Weakness of God is stronger than Men; God can look a Man to Death. The Breath of a Man's Nostrils is a soft and quiet Thing, and yet the very Breath of God's Nostrils can blast the Soul, and burn it to a very Cinder: Oh! then tremble to think what Wrath his heavy Hand can inflict upon them; that Hand that *spreads out the Heavens, and in the hollow of which he holds the great Waters of the Sea;* that Hand of God in which his great Strength lies; oh! what Wrath will it inflict upon thee, when it falls upon thee in the full Power of his Might?

3.  
This con-  
suming  
Fire is un-  
quench-  
able.

Thirdly, Consider this consuming Fire, after it hath once seized upon the Soul, is for ever unquenchable. Indeed thou mayest hinder it from kindling upon thy Soul. As when a House is on Fire, they use to spout Water upon the Walls of the neighbouring Houses, to keep the Flames from catching hold of them: So you may, by sprinkling the Blood

of

of Jesus Christ, and by moistning your selves with the Tears of true Repentance, prevent this consuming Fire from preying upon you ; but if once it kindles, it will there burn everlastinglly ; it is not like your *sublunary Fires* ; these spend the Matter they feed on, and be they of never so great force they must at length themselves starve for want of Fuel ; yea, the sooner they consume, the sooner are they themselves consumed, as in Straw and other light combustible Matter ; but God is such a Fire as consumes without diminishing, and his Power is such a Power as destroys the Soul and yet perpetuates it ; he is such a wise and intelligent Fire as consumes the Damned and yet repairs them , and by tormenting still nourishes them for future Torments. As *Minutius* speaks ; the same Breath of God that destroys the Soul, still keeps it alive, that it may be eternal Fuel for it self. Hence is it that Hell-Fire is described to be such as shall never be quenched, *Mark 9. 44.* And why ? but because the *Breath of the Lord, like a fiery Stream,* is still kindling of it. Why now into the midst of this devouring Fire must the Damned dwell, without any period either

either to their Being or to their Torment, and when they have lain there frying millions and millions of Years, still is it but a beginning of their Sorrows, and they are as far from a Releafe and Discharge as they were at the first. Think with your selves, how long and how tedious a little time seems to you when you are in Pain; you complain then, that Time hath leaden Feet, and wish that the Days and Hours would roll away faster: Oh! what will it be then, when you shall lie Sweating, Sweltring and Frying in Hell, when the intolerableness of Pain shall make every Hour seem an Age, and every Year seem a long Eternity it self, and yet you must lie an Eternity of those Years there? This makes their Torments doubly everlasting. Me-thinks the dreadful Thoughts of this eternally consuming Fire, should make the stoutest Heart to quake, or at least to cause a cold Fit of Fear, before this burning and scorching Torment begins.

4.  
God is  
such a con-  
suming  
Fire as will  
prey upon  
the Soul.

Fourthly, God is such a consuming Fire as will prey upon the Soul, that tender and spiritual part of Man. The more prey upon gross the Subject is, the more dull are the

the Pains that it suffers; but where the Subject is spiritual, there the Anguish must needs be extream; the sharpest Torments that the Body is capable of, is but a dull Thing in comparison of what the Soul can feel; when God himself shall lash the Soul, that more refined part, drawing Blood at every stroke, all comparisons falls short of expressing of the Anguish of it: To shoot poison'd Darts inflamed into a Man's Marrow, to rip up his Bowels with a Sword red hot, is as nothing to this. Think what it is to have a drop of boiling, scalding Oil, or melting Lead fall into your Eyes, and make it boil and burn till at last it falls out of your Heads; such Torments, yea, infinitely more than this, is it to have the Wrath of God fall upon your Souls. The Soul it is the Principle of all Seats, the Body is a kind of Fence to it, it damps and deadens the Smart, as a Blow upon a cloathed Man is not so painful as upon one that is stark Naked; why now if the Soul sometimes feels such Smart and Pain through the Body, what shall it feel when God shall pour his Wrath upon it stark Naked?

Fifthly,

5.  
The longer we live in Sin, the more we prepare our Souls to be Fuel for this consuming Fire.

Fifthly, Consider the longer thou livest in thy Sins impenitently, the more dost thou prepare thy Soul to be fit Fuel for this consuming Fire to devour : This is but like the Oiling of a Barrel of Pitch, which of it self was apt enough before to burn. Those whom the Wrath of God snatches away in the beginning of their Days, are made Fuel for that consuming Fire ; and if it be done so to the green Tree, what will be done to the dry and rotten Tree ? Thou that hast stood many Years rotting in the World, when God shall come and cut thee down and cast thee into unquenchable Fire, how soon will thou kindle and how dreadfully wilt thou burn, having no Sap left in thee to allay and mitigate those Flames ? Certainly would but the most hardened Sinner here present, call his Thoughts aside awhile, and seriously bethink himself what he hath been doing ever since he came into the World, this must needs strike him as cold as a Stone, making him to Fear and Tremble to consider, that all this time he hath, by his Sinning, been treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, heaping up Coals, yea,

yea, burning Coals upon his own Head. Every time you sin, what do you else but cast in another Faggot to that Pile of much Wood, prepared to burn you for ever? Oh! that these dreadful and amazing Considerations might, at length, rouze and awaken your Hearts to fear this consuming Fire, and to tremble at that Wrath that is now kindling in God's Breast against you, and which will, if you repent not, ere long kindle upon you.

*But you will say, to fear God only be- Question.  
cause he is a consuming Fire, meerly be-  
cause of his Wrath and fiery Indignation,  
is but, at best, a slavish Fear; it is but to  
fear him as the Devils do, for they believe  
and tremble; and of what use and benefit  
will such a Fear as this be?*

I Answer; It is true, First, to fear Answ. 1. God meerly upon the account of Wrath is but a slavish Fear; but yet it is far better to fear God slavishly, than to perish securely; that will come with redoubled Terror which comes unexpectedly. How intolerable will Hell be to those, especially, that never fear it till they feel it? When Sinners shall see them-

It is bet-  
ter to fear  
God sla-  
vishly, than  
to perish  
securely.

themselves surrounded with Flames of Fire, before ever they thought themselves in any danger ; when they shall awake with the Flames of Hell flashing and flaming about them, what Screechings and Yellings will this cause ? This is to perish as a Fool perisheth, to go on securely in Sin, till unexpectedly a Dart suddenly strikes through his Liver. Whatever the Event be, yet it becomes the Reason of a Man to be affected with Fear, proportionable to the Evil that he lies obnoxious to ; therefore whether this slavish Fear ends in Torment or not, yet it is more rational to fear that we are exposed to it, than to be secure and go down into Torments, and never to fear them till we feel them.

2. *Secondly*, This Fear, though a slavish Fear, is of great efficacy to deter Men from the outward Acts of more gross and scandalous Sins. He that puts Hell betwixt him and his Sins, will scarce be so daring as to venture through a Lake of Fire and Brimstone to commit them. God thought he had set a sufficient Guard upon the Tree of Life, when he placed *Cherubims* and a *flaming Sword*

Slavish  
Fear will  
deter Men  
from scan-  
dalous  
Sins.

Sword to keep Men from it ; but to keep Men from Sin, he hath placed a Guard far more dreadful than Angels or a flaming Sword ; he hath placed himself, a consuming Fire, to deter Men from Sin ; and they certainly that have any Fear or Dread of God upon their Hearts , will judge it too too hot a Work to break through this Fire to their Lusts. The Thoughts of Hell and those everlasting Torments due to Sin , have doubtless been often used with good success to repel Satan's Temptations ; when no other Arguments possibly could prevail , yet when the Devil hath cast fiery Darts at them, they have cast Fire-brands again at him, and so have overcome him.

Thirdly, Where the fear of Wrath doth prevail to restrain Men from Sin, this is a good Effect, for it doth lessen and mitigate that Wrath that they fear. Those that add Iniquity to Iniquity, without Fear upon them , God will heap Plague upon Plague , without measure ; he proportions Mens Punishments to their Sins, and those that Fear most shall feel least ; that Fear of theirs that kept them from the gross

3.  
Slavish  
Fear will  
mitigate  
Wrath.

Acts

Acts of Sins that others boldly rush into, that Fear shall likewise keep them from the forest Torments that others shall for ever suffer.

4.  
Slavish  
Fear is  
prepara-  
tory to,  
and indu-  
ctive of  
filial Fear.

*Fourthly*, This slavish Fear is Isagogical; that is, it is preparatory to and inductive of a filial and holy Fear of God. We usually fear God first as a revenging Judge, before we come to fear him with a reverential, filial Fear, as a reconciled Father. As the *Poet of Old* fabulously fansied, that the Giants heaped Mountain upon Mountain, that they might scale Heaven. This is true in Christianity, the way to climb Heaven is by laying one Mountain upon another, even *Mount Sion* upon *Mount Sinai*. Those commonly prove the most stable and stayed Christians, that have been most harrassed by legal Terrors before they enjoy the sense of Comfort; for the Structure of Grace in the Heart is quite contrary to other Buildings; it stands firmest when it is laid upon a shaking and trembling Foundation. It is a Seed that never thrives so well as where the Heart is most broken up, and where the Wrath of God hath made long and deep Furrows in it.

Well

Well now to conclude this, methinks what hath already been spoken, should fill the Heart of every carnal Wretch with Fear; methinks this should make them cry out with those Sinners in Sion, Isa. 33. 14. *Who among us shall dwell with devouring Fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings?* Isa. 33. 14. Can the Drunkard hear these things, and yet put his intemperate Cups to his Mouth with a steady Hand? Can the Swearer hear these things, and yet his Tongue move steady in his Mouth, and not tremble when he raps out Oaths? Certainly how secure and confident foever Men may now be, yet there is a time coming when the Wrath of God shall melt down their Hearts like Wax, in the midst of their Bowels. Death is a thundring Preacher, and it will make you fear the dreadful Representations of that fiery Indignation, that shortly it will display before your Eyes in all its Terrors. Oh! when your Eyes shall swim in the Night and in the Dark, and it cannot be long first, when you shall meet with those dreadful Shapes and Visions of a flaming Hell and a more flaming God, it will be

too late then to Fear, and alas! it will be too late then to Hope, God will then laugh at your Calamity ; and mock at you when this unseasonable Fear cometh. Be persuaded , therefore, to entertain a Fear of God at last, though but a slavish Fear ; this is the preparation that the Holy Ghost works in the Heart, in order to a filial and a holy Fear of God.

**Use 2.** *Secondly*, Another Use that we may make of this Point is this : If God be a consuming Fire , how highly doth it concern us to look out for a Screen that may fence us from those everlasting Burnings ? We are Stubble and Fuel fully prepared , our Sins have made us so, and for us to stand it out against God, is no other than for dried Stubble to challenge the devouring Fire. Now God , that he might not break forth upon us and destroy us, hath himself prepared a Screen to hide and shelter us from this flaming Wrath, and that is Christ the Mediator. We have a live-  
Numb. 16. 48. ly Type of this in *Aaron*, Numb. 16. 48. when the rebellious *Israelites* mutined against *Moses*, God did suddenly break forth upon them, and slew almost fifteen hundred

hundred thousand of them Dead upon the Place. As Fire runs on a Train of Powder, so did this Wrath of God pass swiftly from one to another, till *Aaron* interposed and stopt it; therestood that mighty Priest as a Bulwark betwixt the living and the dead, and intercepted the rest from this destroying Wrath; and though it overwhelmed so many Thousands, yet it could not bear down his powerful Intercession; he alone was the Fence and Safeguard of a perishing People. Christ upon the Cross maintains the same Station, interposing betwixt the Living and the Dead; the Wrath of God consumes all before it that is not under the Protection of that Screen, there it stops; and though it seized fiercely upon him too, yet it never burnt through him to reach those that fled for Security to that Refuge set before them. In a general Conflagration, even Chaff and Stubble may be secure, under the Covert of an Adamantine Wall. Though all the Wicked of the World shall burn together, and all Believers be in themselves as combustible Matter as they, yet Christ interposeth as a Wall of Adamant betwixt Stubble and Stubble; and when

the Wrath of God hath consumed the one, he stands and keeps off the Impressions of it from the other. Indeed there is a Wall that stands betwixt God and every wicked Man, but it is a Wall of Partition, as the *Apostle* calls it, Eph. 2. 14. it is a Wall that separates them from the Love and Favour of God, and hides his Face from them. A Partition of dry and rotten Boards may keep off the Light and kindly Influences of the Sun, but it is no Fence against the Rage of Fire, but rather increaseth and augments it. So wicked Men are separated from the Love and Favour of God by their Sins, Isa. 59. 2. *Your Iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God*; yea, and they keep off his cherishing Influences, but they contribute to his fiery Wrath. Why now Christ is a Wall of Defence, that separates his from the Wrath and Indignation of God. A Wall of *Crystal* is a safe Defence against the force of Fire, yet is it no obstruction to the warm Beams and cherishing Light of the Sun. Such a Crystal Wall is Christ, that keeps off God's fiery Indignation from us, but yet conveys to us the cherishing and reviving Influences of his Love.

Let

Let me now persuade and prevail with you to betake your selves to this shelter. The same Storm of Fire and Brimstone that destroyed *Sodom*, hovers over all the Wicked of the World, and we are as *Lot*, still lingring behind; let me therefore hasten you, as the *Angel* did him, to your *Zar*, to get under the Protection of Christ, whether the fiery Indignation of God cannot pursue you. In the former Instance, when the *Israelites* saw so many of their Fellows slain by an un-perceived Stroke, what running and crowding was there, think you, to get behind the *Priest*? Why we are all in the same Danger, but we have a more prevalent *High-Priest*: There are Thousands dying and perishing under the Wrath of God; and shall not we then with Fear and Trembling, press close behind our High Priest, that by him we may be hid from this consuming Fire?

Thirdly, *The next Use shall be to exhort you to a holy Fear and Reverence of this great and terrible God.* I lately gave you several Considerations, enough to daunt the boldest Sinners, and to bring them at least to a slavish Fear: Be persuaded

fueded now to advance it a Degree higher, and to over-awe your Hearts with a *holy, filial Fear of God*. It is the same Exhortation that *Solomon* gives us, *Prov. 23. 17. Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the Day long.* This is a true Christians frame, when in all the Affairs and Actions of our Lives, in what Company soever we are in, or whatever we are doing, the Fear of God is still upon us, when in all our Converse in the World this Fear of God doth still fill and posses our Hearts. I shall only give you a few Particulars, and leave them to your serious Consideration.

I.  
The Fear  
of God  
will keep  
you from  
a vain and  
frothy  
Spirit.

First, *This holy Fear of God will keep you from a vain and frothy Spirit.* The Heart of Man is the great Receptacle of Thoughts; the most part of them are light and feathery, they fly up and down as thick, and to as little purpose, as Moats in a Sun-beam. It is strange to observe what a giddy Thing the Mind of Man is: As an empty Vessel rolls too and fro, and is tossed up and down by every Wave, never failing steadily; so is the vain Mind of Man driven by every foolish and impertinent Thought, till the fear of God, that is,

is, the Ballast of the Soul, poise it and make its Course steady and even. Certainly if any thing be of force to compose the Heart into a sober, serious Frame, it is the consideration of God's great and dreadful Majesty, the fear of which will fill us with noble and substantial Thoughts how we may escape his Wrath, and how we may secure to our selves eternal Happiness. These are important Thoughts, and they ought to be our great and only Care, that so we may approve our selves to God, and be at the last Day found of him in well-doing. Before the Heart is ballasted with this Fear of God, it runs after every vagrant Thought that comes cross us or fleets before us; as Children run after every Feather that the Wind drives. But now the Fear of God fixeth this fleetiness, and brings the Heart to a holy consistency and solidity in its Thoughts: It is this Fear that united the Heart, and therefore David prays, *Psal. 86. 11. Unite my Heart unto thee, that I may fear thy Name.*

2.

The Fear  
of God is  
an excel-  
lent Pre-  
servative  
against all  
com-  
sin.

Secondly, *The Fear of God is an excellent Preservative against all Sin.* Slave-

X 4

committing gross and flagitious Crimes; but this holy Fear over-awes the Heart from secret and hidden Sins, yea, from the Sins of the Heart, that none can see but only God, and a Man's own Conscience; and therefore it is said,

*Psal. 19. 9.* *The fear of the Lord is clean;* that is, it keeps the Soul clean from the defilement of Sin. Now there are Defilements of two sorts; Defilements of the Flesh, when Men wallow in gross and sensual Sins; and Defilements also of the Spirit, and such are they that reside in the Heart, and break not forth into outward Act: Now from both these the Fear of God cleanseth us. So

*2Cor. 7. 1.* *Let us cleanse our selves,* says the Apostle, *from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.* And indeed wherever the Fear of God is implanted, it will over-awe us, as well from offending God in our Thoughts as in our Actions, and make us that we shall be as afraid of Sinning against him by Unbelief and Impenitency, as well as by Murder and Blasphemy.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *This holy Fear of God is a most sovereign Preservative against Hypocrisie.* What is Hypocrisie, but only a mocking of God to his Face? It is a design to put a solemn Cheat upon God. Certainly where the Fear of God over-awes the Heart, we shall not dare to abuse his holy and reverend Name as Hypocrites do, in their making mention of him. When we speak of him with our Lips, but never think of him with our Hearts, this is to abuse the holy and reverend Name of God; and it is a sure Argument that they stand in no dread of God, whose Hearts meditate Vanity with Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven. Will any dare in the presence of a Prince, while they pretend Reverence to him, to use antick Gestures? Would not this justly be interpreted a Contempt of him? Why all the religious Gestures of Hypocrites are but Antick; and while they move their Lips in Prayer, without the corresponding motion of the Heart, they do but make Mouths at God; and how can they fear him, that are thus audacious to scoff at him? Yea, the Scripture sets it down as a remarkable

The Fear  
of God is  
a most so-  
vereign  
Preserva-  
tive &  
against Hy-  
pocrisie.

*Isa. 33.  
12. 14.* kable Matter, when Hypocrites begin  
to fear God ; Isa. 33. 12, 14. Hear ye  
*and acknowledge my Might*, says God :  
*Why what's the matter? The Sinners in*  
*Sin are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized*  
*the Hypocrites.* It is much easier to ter-  
rise and daunt profligate Sinners than  
gross Hypocrites ; because Hypocrites,  
by often dallying with God, wear off  
all Sense and Dread of God, and arrive  
at length to a plain contempt and scorn  
of him. If therefore you would in  
every Duty approve your Hearts in  
Sincerity unto God, nourish in you this  
holy Fear of his Majesty. This Fear  
is that which makes a Christian single-  
hearted ; and, as the Apostle commands  
*Servants, Col. 3. 22. to obey their Masters*  
*not as Men-pleasers, but in singleness of*  
*Heart, fearing God.* So where this holy  
Fear of God possessesthe Soul, it will  
cause all our Obedience to be performed  
in the singleness and integrity of our  
Hearts, not so much to be seen of Men  
as to be accepted of God. It is a re-  
markable place, that in Job. 24. 14.  
*Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve*  
*him in Sincerity.* The Fear of God is of  
a mighty influence to Sincerity in all  
our Services and Performances that we  
*render*

render unto God ; it is that that will make the Heart sincere in them. *Fear the Lord, and serve him in Sincerity.*

Fourthly, *This holy Fear will put us upon all Endeavors to please God, and to gain favour with him.* This is the most natural effect of Fear, to engage us to procure their Love whose Power we dread. *The Devil* knew no such way to get himself Worship and Adoration, as by terrifying the *old Heathens*; and still he useth the same Artifice in those parts of the World where his Kingdom yet remains, he appears in dreadful Shapes, and terrifies them on purpose that he may extort from them a blind, superstitious Worship. So where the Soul is affected with a holy Fear of God, it will engage it to please him, and to avoid whatever may kindle his Anger. And therefore says the Apostle, *2 Cor. 5. 9, 10. We labour that we may be accepted of him;* and why so? Yes, says he, *for we must be judged by him.* The Fear of being judged by God at the Tribunal of Christ at the last Day, engaged the *Apostle* to labour to please God and to be accepted by him.

4.  
The Fear  
of God  
will put us  
upon all  
Endeavors  
to please  
God.

Fifthly,

5. Fifthly, *The Fear of God is an excellent Corrective of the base and degenerous Fear of Men.* Our Saviour says, Luke 12. 4. *Be not afraid of them that can kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* It is well observed by a learned Author, that Men may be considered either as they bear upon them some resemblance and impress of the divine Majesty, as they are invested with Authority and Power, and constituted Magistrates and Rulers over us: This resemblance is so great that the Scripture stiles them Gods, *I have said ye are Gods;* and so we are to fear them with a Fear of Reverence and Obedience, and to obey them in that which is lawful. And they may be considered also as standing in opposition to God, abusing their Power by commanding things that are unlawful, and by Persecution endeavouring to terrifie Men from the Ways and Service of God: And so they may be feared with a Fear of flight and eschewal. *When ye are persecuted in one City, flee you to another,* Matth. 10. 23. We may so fear

fear them as to labour to avoid their Rage, and to consult our own Safety. But the Fear that is here forbidden is, *Fear not them that can kill the Body*; that is, with a distrustful, perverting Fear, such a Fear as causeth Men for the securing of their temporal Life to desert the Profession and Practice of Godliness; with such a Fear, Fear not Men. He will not, that truly fears God, thus fear Men; no, the Fear of God lays a check upon this sinful Fear of Men, he that truly fears God will not immoderately fear Men; for it is the property of holy Fear to represent the displeasure of God, as an infinitely greater Evil than the loss of Estate, Liberty, nay, of Life it self, or whatever the Rage and Power of Man can either inflict or threaten, and this makes them choose Affliction rather than Sin. See this fearless Spirit in those three Heroick Champions, *Dan. 3. 16.* who though they saw *a burning, fiery Furnace* before them, into which they were threatned to be cast, yet all the Terrors of it did not fright them to an Idolatrous Worship; with what a holy Contempt and Slighting did they answer King Nebuchadnezar? *We are not careful,* say they,

*Dan. 3. 16.*

to

*to answer thee in this matter.* And whence proceeded this undaunted Courage, but only because they were more afraid of God, who is a consuming Fire, than they were of a fiery Furnace? A Man that truly fears God, reputes with himself, that to gain the favour of Men with the displeasure of God, to redeem a temporal Life by an eternal Death, is the foolishest Bargain that can be made; he knows the rage of Man is under the restraint of God, and that a Hair of his Head shall not fall to the Ground without his heavenly Father's Knowledge and Permission; and if God doth suffer wicked Men to inflict the utmost that their Rage and Spight can prompt them unto, yet it reacheth only their earthly part, the dull part of Man, the Body; they may persecute, torment and kill us, but yet they cannot hurt us; one momentary Gripe of Hells Torments is infinitely more intolerable, than all the Cruelties that Men can possibly invent or inflict; one Frown from an angry God hath more Dread and Terror in it, than all the Rage and Threatnings of the most barbarous and cruel Tyrants; and that Christian that makes such

such an account as this is, can never certainly so fear Torment or Death, as to be drawn to Sin against God, whose Displeasure he more fears than he fears either Torment or Death.

Now to shut up this whole Subject, I shall only briefly mention a few Particulars to you, whereby you may take a brief View of what there is in the Nature of God, that may justly affect us with a holy Fear and Awe of him.

First, *The Consideration of God's glorious Majesty may strike us into a holy Dread and Terror.* And therefore says Job

I.

*His glori-  
ous Ma-  
jesty.*

33. 22. *With God is terrible Majesty.* Job 33.22. This is that which daunts the holy Angels in Heaven, they cover their Faces with their Wings, as not being able to bear the piercing Rays of that Glory wherewith he is cloathed. An earthly Prince, when he is set forth in the Royalty and Grandeur of his State, casts an awe upon those that approach near him. And how much more ought we to fear the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven, who is always clad with Light as with a Garment; that Light which

which no mortal Eye can approach, being always surrounded with an innumerable Host of glittering Attendance, each of which maintains more Pomp and State than the greatest Potentate on Earth.

2.  
His Al-  
mighty  
Power.

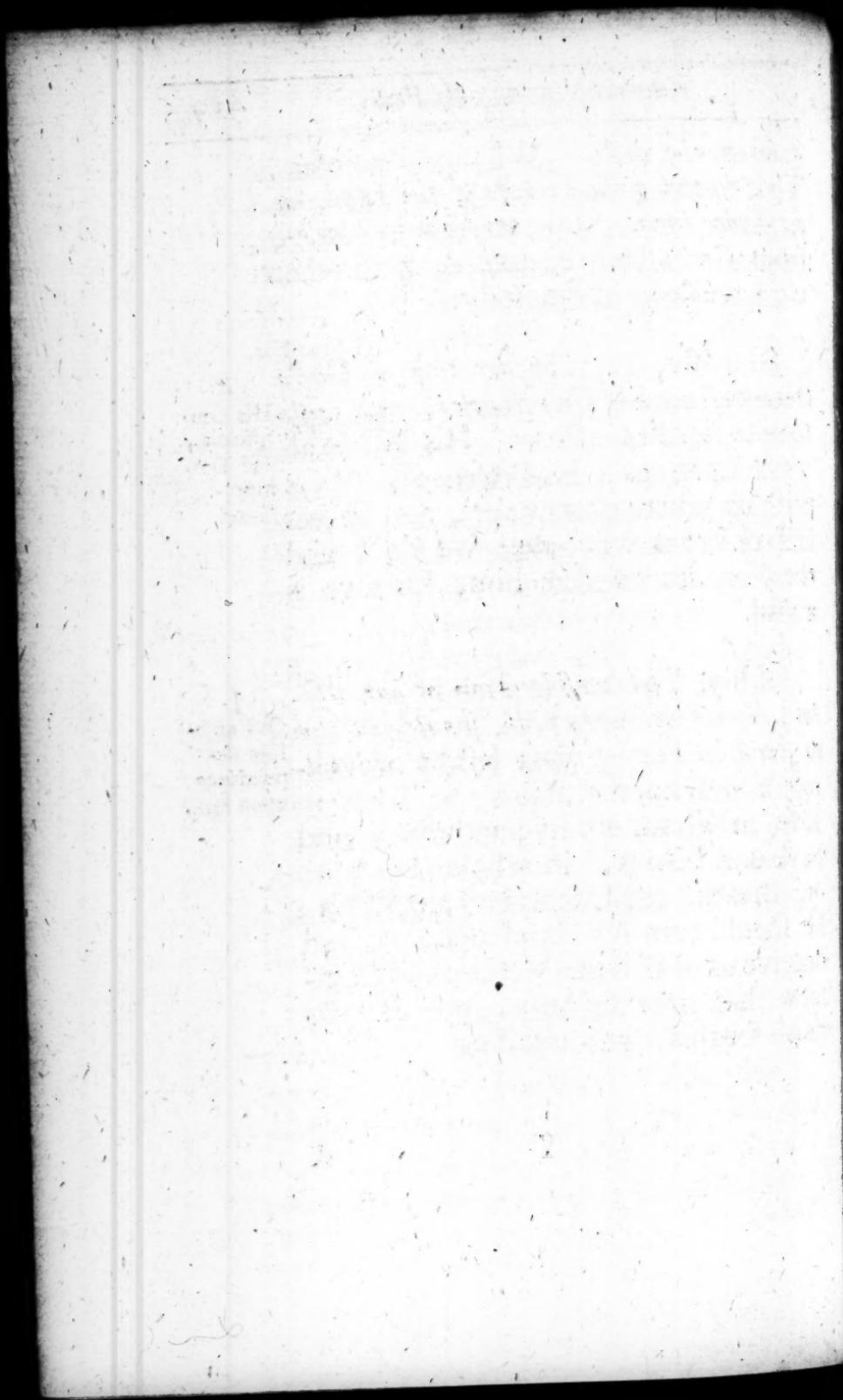
*Job 25. 2. Dominion and Fear are with him;*  
not that God hath any Fear, or stands in Fear, but the Dominion and Sovereignty of God causeth Fear; it strikes the Heart with an awful Fear, when we consider that Dominion and Fear are with God. That Power and Authority of God, by which he exerciseth his Dominion, causeth a Fear of him.

3. *Thirdly, The severe and impartial Justice of God, whereby he renders to every one according to his Works; this should kindle in us a holy Fear of God.* So the *2 Cor. 5. Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11. We must receive, says he, according to what we have done*

done in the Body. Whence he infers, That knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we persuade Men. It is terrible to receive from God's Justice, according to what we have done in the Body.

Fourthly, *The Consideration of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience*, may cause His Omnipresence and Omniscience in us a holy Fear of him. His Eye is always upon us, his Presence is always with us where-ever we are, and he sees and observes what-ever we do, and therefore let us fear him, his Eye is awful.

Fifthly, *The consideration of our absolute dependance upon God, should cause us to stand in Fear of him*; left by provoking him who maintains our Souls in Life, in whom we live and move, and have our beings, in whose Hands are our Breath, our Life and all our Ways; he should turn his Hand upon us, and deprive us of all those Mercies and Comforts that now he heaps upon us. So much for this Time and Text.



A  
DISCOURSE  
OF THE  
NATURE,  
Corruption and Renewing,  
OF THE  
CONSCIENCE.

W I T H

Accounts of the Moment of having a  
*Conscience void of Offence to God and Men.*

F R O M

*A C T S xxiv. 16.*

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By *EZEKIEL HOPKINS,*  
Late Lord Bishop of *London-derry.*

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*L O N D O N :*

Printed for *Jonathan Robinson, A. and*  
*J. Churchill, John Taylor and John*  
*Wyat.* 1696.

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## CONSIDERATION

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3. *Principles of Medicine*, by James B. Smith, M.D.

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# DISCOURSE OF THE NATURE, Corruption and Renewing, OF THE CONSCIENCE.

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## ACTS xxiv. 16.

*Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.*

**I**N this Chapter St. Paul gives an account to *Felix* of the general Course and Demeanor of his former Life, being accused by *Tertullian*, a flattering Orator, as one who was Pro-

phane and Seditious: After that he had purged himself in sundry Particulars, he comes to the *Text*, to shew, that he was far from those Crimes that were laid to his Charge, having made it his constant Exercise all his Life-time to keep a good Conscience.

The Words have little or no Difficulty in them; and therefore, instead of giving you an elaborate Exposition, I shall only run them over with a brief *Paraphrase*.

**The Ex-  
plication  
of the  
Words.**

*Herein do I exercise my self*; that is, I make it my constant Care and Employment, *to have a Conscience void of Offence*; that is, to keep my Conscience clear that it may not justly accuse me of any *Offence* done either against God or against Men; that is, I labour conscientiously to practise as well the Duties of the *second*, as the Duties of the *first Table*; to be Just towards Men as well as to be Religious towards God, knowing that the one without the other, to be without Offence towards Men only is but *meer Morality*, and to be without Offence only towards God is but *vain Hypocrisie*. Without farther

Expli-

Explication, the Words do, of their own accord, deliver to us this Doctrin :

*That it should be our continual Care Doctrin. and Employment, in all Things whether relating to God or Man, to keep clear and inoffensive Consciences.*

Conscience is nothing but a practical Syllogism or Argumentation, and always infers a personal Conclusion, either excusing or accusing ; and it hath three Offices.

*First*, It discovers to us what is Sin and what is Duty, and the Reward that is entailed upon both, and thus it gives in its Verdict according to that Light that shines into it : If it hath only the twilight of Nature to illustrate it, as the *Heathens* had no other, then it can pass Judgment only upon natural Duties and unnatural Sins. Thus the Consciences of *Heathens*, through some remainders of original Knowledge, informed them that Worship was due to God and Justice to Men, and that all Impieties against God, and all Injuries against Men, should in the end be <sup>The Offices of Conscience.</sup> <sup>I.</sup> <sup>It informs what is Sin, and what is Duty.</sup>

verely punished. But if Conscience enjoys the superadded Light of Scripture, it judges then of those Duties and those Sins that could only be known by *Divine Revelation*: Hence it is that Conscience is enabled to form such a Proposition as this, *He that believes shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned*. This Proposition it forms not from natural Light, but from the super-induced Light of Scripture. This is the first direct Act of Conscience, whereby it pronounceth of Men's Works, whither they be sinful or not, and what the Reward or Punishment is that shall follow them, according as it finds it written in the dark and imperfect *Law of Nature*, or in the superadded *Law of God*.

## 2.

It witnesseth and deposeth.

*Secondly*, When Conscience hath thus pronounced whether the Action be good or bad, and what Reward or Punishment belong to it, it's next Office is to *witness and depose*, we have done such or such Actions; this is a reflex Act, whereby when Conscience hath discovered what is Sin and what is Duty, it testifies that either we have performed the one, or that we have committed the other: The *Scripture* reveals, that Faith shall

shall be rewarded with eternal Life, and Unbelief punished with Death eternal ; hereupon *Conscience* makes reflection upon it self and applies the *Proposition*, but I believe or I do not believe, and that is its witnessing or depositing Office.

Thirdly, It hath besides this, the Office of a Judge to acquit or condemn; and this it doth by inferring a comfortable or a terrifying Conclusion from the former Premises, applying the Reward or Punishment to our selves, according as those Actions have been ours to which they belong : If it hath proved us Unbelievers, strait it pronounceth us condemned Persons, or if it evidences our Faith to us presently, it justifies and acquits us : Hence it is that wicked Men are haunted with pale Fears and ghastly Reflections, because they are always *Malefactors* arraigned at a Bar, a Bar that they carry about with them in their own Breasts, where they hear a thousand *Witnesses* sworn and examined, where they hear their Judge ten thousand times a Day pronouncing them Cursed and Damned. And hence it is also that there is sometimes diffused into

3.  
It acq'nts  
or con-  
demns.

into the Hearts of God's Children such sweet Joy, such solid Peace, such calm Stayedness, and some Prelibations of heavenly Bliss, because they carry in their Breasts a *Court of Judicature* where their earthly Judge Conscience acquits them, and assures them that their heavenly Judge will do so also. This is *Conscience*, that faithful Register in every Man's Bosom, that writes down the Actions, Discourses and Cogitations of every Hour and Minute.

Now this being premised concerning the Nature and Offices of *Conscience*, I shall come in the next place to enquire into these following Particulars, into which I shall digest the method of this Subject.

1. First, *What it is that doth corrupt and vitiate Conscience.*
2. Secondly, *What it is to have a clear Conscience;*
3. Thirdly, *Of what Importance and Consequence it is that our Consciences be kept clear and void of Offence;* under which I shall give you the Reasons of the Point.

Fourth,

Fourthly, I shall lay down some Rules  
and Means whereby we may attain unto and  
keep a pure and clean Conscience. 4.

First, What is it that doth corrupt and  
vitiate Conscience in executing of its Offices. Now this I shall couch under Two Particulars; and they are, Ignorance and wilful Sinning.

I. *Ignorance corrupts the Conscience.* I.  
Conscience is the Guide of Life, and Ignorance  
Knowledge is the Eye of Conscience, which if it be darkned, the Blind leads  
the Blind till both fall into the Ditch,  
Conscience is a Guide that leads apace,  
and therefore had need see its Way before it, which some not being well  
able to discern, have wound themselves  
into inextricable Wandrings, pursuing  
every glaring Delusion, and running  
after every skipping Light that danceth  
before it, till at laft they have lost both  
themselves and their Consciences too:  
How many are there that have thus be-  
wildred themselves in their own Fan-  
ties and Opinions, and so have fallen  
upon the Precipice of damnable Errors,  
and into Bogs of Mire and filthy Lusts,  
only

only through an *ignorant Conscience* and self-conceited Pride that is always a Companion of it ; this *Ignorance* fills the *Conscience* with false Presumptions, and draws it to wrong Determinations and Conclusions , which though they seem to be but little mistakes in the Notion, yet are they most destructive and pernicious in a Man's practice : As a small mistake in the levelling of an Arrow at the Hand, makes a wide distance at the Mark ; so a small mistake in the Notion of Truth , makes a wide error in the practice of Godliness . A *mis-persuaded Conscience* usually gives rise to *misguided Zeal*, and *Zeal* without Knowledge is but a *Religious Phrensie* , that fashions out to it self strange shapes of Sin and Duty, of Good and Evil, and usually it takes the one for the other, until it falls under that Woe denounced by the Prophet, Isa. 5. 20. *Woe to them that call Good, Evil; and Evil, Good; that put Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.* Now *Ignorance* doth vitiate and corrupt the *Conscience* two ways ; either it makes it unnecessarily scrupulous , or else it makes it daringly presumptuous,

*Ignorance  
vitiates  
the Con-  
science  
two ways.*

*First,*

First, *Ignorance* fetters and binds up the *Conscience* either to the doing of, or abstaining from that concerning which God hath laid no Law and Obligation

By making it unnecessary; scrupulous.

at all upon it: This is an encroaching *Conscience* that makes that an enclosure that God hath left common, and rigorously exacts from us what God hath permitted as indifferent. It is a very bad Judgment to be given up to the domineering Impositions of a *scrupulous Conscience*; such a *Conscience* as this is will certainly make much more Sin than ever the *Law* made; for whatever we do against the Commands of *Conscience* is Sin, though it be not immediately and directly against the Commands of God: Why now some there are that do Rom. 14. so needlessly pin and coop up themselves 23. that they cannot stir, nor moderately use that lawful Liberty that God hath indulged them, but presently they are entangled in Sin, because of the imperious Prohibitions of their own *Consciences*.

2.

Secondly, Sometimes *Ignorance* makes the *Conscience* licentious, indulging it self in those Actions that the Law of God condemns, making it daringly presumptuous;

By making it licentious, and daringly presumptuous.

ptuous ; and this is a quite contrary extreme ; and yet as opposite as these are, we oftentimes find them joined together in the same Persons, the same Persons that have a needlessly *scrupulous Conscience*, have also a daringly, *presumptuous Conscience*, and this proceeds from an Ignorance of their due Bounds and Limits. Who ordinarily so profane as the Superstitious ? Their Ignorance makes them scrupulous Observers of little Circumstances, and yet bold Adventurers upon notorious Sins. What a strange *wry Conscience* have such Men, that tie up themselves strictly where God gives them scope, and yet run riotously where God's Commands and Threatnings restrain, dreading more the transgressing one Law of Man, than they do the transgressing of the whole *moral Law* of God. This is now from *Ignorance*, whereby Men do not know the due Bounds either of that Liberty that God indulgeth them, or that Restraint that God lays upon them. And this is the first Thing that corrupts *Conscience*, namely *Ignorance*.

Secondly,

2.

Secondly, *Wilful Sinning corrupts and vitiates the Conscience*; and that two ways.

*First*, Sometimes such Sins stupifie and deaden the *Conscience*, especially if they become frequent and customary, and therefore we usually call them *Conscience-wasting Sins*. Believe it, through a continued course of known and presumptuous Sins, you will bring your *Consciences* into very sad Consumptions, that they will pine away under Iniquities; and how many are there that have their *Consciences* already lying Speechleſs, Senseleſs and Gasping, ready to give up the Ghost? The Apostle in Eph. 4. 19. speaks of them, *that being past feeling, have given themselves over to Lasciviousness*.

Secondly, Sometimes such Sins do affright, terrifie and enrage the *Conscience*, filling it with dreadful Thoughts of eternal, future Vengeance. Wilful and known Sins sometimes terrifie and enrage the *Conscience*; and this is a Corruption of the *Conscience*, when the Terrors of it are so overwhelming as to sink Men into

Wilful  
Sinning  
corrupts  
Consci-  
ence, and  
that two  
ways.

I.

By stupify-  
ing and  
deadning  
of Con-  
science.

2.

By terrify-  
ing and in-  
raging of  
*Conscience*

*Heb. 10.  
22.*

to Despair ; for mark it, it is its Office to accuse and to threaten for Sin, and the greater the Sin is, the more sharp and stinging ought to be its Reproofs ; but be the Sin never so great for which Conscience reproves , if yet it denounceth Wrath without making mention of Repentance and hopes of Mercy, it exceeds its Commission that God hath given it, and becomes an evil and corrupt Conscience. And therefore we have that Expression , *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw near*, says the Apostle, *having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience.* By an *evil Conscience* here is meant a *despairing Conscience* , from which we are freed only by the Blood of Sprinkling ; to be convinced of Sin and not at all to be convinced of Righteousness, is such a Conviction as constitutes one part of the Torments of the damned in Hell, whose Worm never dies ; and certainly that Conscience must needs be very evil and very corrupt, that breeds in it this *hellish Worm*, while we are here upon Earth. And so much for the first Thing , what it is that corrupts the Conscience.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly, The next Thing propounded is to shew you, What it is to have a clear Conscience.*

Now there are two Things that denominate a *Conscience to be clear*, when it is *pure*, and when it is *peaceable*; when it is free from all known and wilful Defilements, and when it is not justly burnded with the guilt of Sin, then is it a *clear Conscience*.

1. *Then a Man hath a clear Conscience,* when it is free from all known and wilful sins; When it is say, from all known and wilful Sins; all known for it is impossible, while we are encompassed about with Infirmities and oppressed with a heavy Body of Sin and Death, to keep our selves free and pure from all Sin; *For in many things we offend* says St. James 3. 2. But these Sins of daily Weakness and sudden Surreption, as they are usually small Sins and scarce discernible, so are they no Obstructions to a *clear Conscience*, no more than the Moats of the Sun-beams are Obstructions to a clear Day. As for those Quotidian Weaknesses and Sins of daily Infirmity, they neither leave Guilt

nor Defilement upon the Conscience of God's Children; but as their more foul Sins are done away by particular Acts of *Repentance*, so these are done away by a general *state of Repentance*, which state the Children of God are always in; and there is also a constant out-flowing of the Blood of Christ and of the Mercy of God upon the Soul, to remove the Guilt and Filth of those Sins as we fall into them. Then is the *Conscience clear*, when all former Sins being pardoned to us, we daily labour to please God, though it be with manifold Imperfections and Weaknesses; this doth not hinder but that our *Consciences* may be both pure and peaceable, while we thus sincerely strive to keep our selves from all wilful and from all presumptuous Sins, our *Consciences* are clear, notwithstanding the Sins of daily Infirmitie. So says the Psalmist, *Psal.*

19. 13. *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous Sins, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great Transgression.*

That's the first thing; *Conscience* is clear, when it's free from all known and wilful Sins.

*Psal. 19.  
13.*

2. *Then*

2. Then a Man hath a clear Conscience 2.  
when it is not justly burdned with the Guilt When it  
of Sin; I say not justly burdned, be- is not  
cause sometimes we may burden our dened with  
selves without cause, when God hath the guilt  
already forgiven us. Many times, of Sin.  
through Temptations and Desertions,  
God's Children reflect back upon their  
old Sins with new Troubles, and rip  
up their old Wounds and make them  
bleed afresh; they remember against  
themselves what God hath forgotten,  
and with great Terrors accuse and con-  
demn themselves for what God hath  
already remitted to them. Now here  
I shall lay down two Things.

First, That every quiet Conscience is  
not a clear Conscience.

1.

Secondly, That every troubled Consci-  
ence is not an evil Conscience.

2.

First, Every quiet Conscience is not a  
clear Conscience. Some are lull'd asleep Every  
in security, and their Consciences are quietCon-  
science is  
quiet merely because they are insensible;  
it may be they have so harrafled and  
wafted their Consciences by dreadful  
Sins,

Sins, so often mortally wounded them, that now they have not Strength enough to become quarrelsome and troublesome, and this they call *Peace*; indeed it is such a *Peace* as *Galgathus* reproaches the *Romans* with in *Tacitus*, when they had laid all waste, then they called it *Peace*: So these Sinners think they have good peaceable Consciences because they do not menace, torment and worry them; and, alas, how can they? their Consciences are murdered, there is no Sense nor Life left in them. This is no *Peace*, but a meer *Solitude* and *Desolation* of Conscience; and yet, believe it too, these quiet and peaceable Consciences will not be long so; at the Hour of Death, or if not then, the next moment after Death, these *peaceable Consciences* will be startled out of their Sleep, and with fearful Screeches fly in their Faces and roar so loud, that *Heaven* and *Hell* shall hear them. As in still Weather many times Matter is gathering for a Storm; so while *Conscience* seems so still and quiet, it is only gathering Matter for a Tempest, that will one Day pour upon your Heads; and O! how grievous will it be when those Consciences, that never gave them

an ill Word before, shall on a sudden drag them before the Tribunal of God, and there bitterly accuse them of those horrid Sins that once they seem'd to take no notice of, and call for the severest execution of divine Wrath and Vengeance upon them? And possibly many that speak of the Peace of their Consciences, do not find it so neither, they are as far from a peaceable Conscience, as they are from a raving and a raging Conscience : A raving Conscience soon discov'ers it self in hellish Despair, but there are many whose Consciences do not rave and yet are never quiet, they give them many a secret twitch and gurd at the very Heart, not outwardly discernible by others; as *Thunder* rumbles long in the Entrails of a Cloud, that never breaks forth into dreadful and terrible Cracks ; so a Man may have a rumbling and a grumbling Conscience, a Conscience that may murmur and scole upon him, and yet he may carry it as if all were calm and serene with him: However tho all within may be quiet, yet a *quiet* Conscience may be a *polluted* Conscience, as a standing Puddle may be as foul as the *raging* *Sea*, when it casts out its *Mire* and *Filth*.

2.  
Every  
troubled  
Conscience  
is not an  
evil Con-  
science.

Secondly, *As every quiet Conscience is not a clear Conscience, so every troubled Conscience is not an evil Conscience.* Hypocrites and wicked Men may indeed, and do often, so judge: Would God ever suffer such strange Terrors to seize upon Men, were they not notorious Sinners? As those *Barbarians at Malta*, spoken of in the *Acts*, when they saw the *Viper* fasten upon the Apostle's Hand, presently they concluded that he was some wicked Person, *whom divine Vengeance would not suffer to live.* So these Men, when they see the Worm of Conscience fasten upon others, presently they judge them guilty of notorious Crimes, such Crimes for which the Vengeance and Wrath of God pursues them; but this is a wrong Censure and most unjust. For the most part it is seen, that those that have the best Consciences are most troubled, at least for a time, until the *Holy Ghost* persuade them of the Love of God, and of the Pardon of their Sins. It is the greatest Fault of a tender Conscience, that it mis-interpretes every thing against it self; and oftentimes when God rejoiceth over it, it apprehends he frowns upon

upon it; mistaking the firing of a *Burn-fire* for the firing of a *Beacon*, and give an Alarm when they should proclaim Peace and Joy ; many times it is so with them that have tender Consciences ; a Man may be long troubled for those Sins that are already pardoned to him. *Nathan* comes to *David*, and tells him, upon his Confession, that he had sinned, *2 Sam. 12. 13.* *I have sinned,* *2 Sam. 12.* says he ; and God by *Nathan* tells him, <sup>13.</sup> that he had *put away his Sin* from him ; and yet his Conscience, though it were clear in respect of any Guilt that God charged upon him, yet it was not clear in respect of what he himself charged upon himself ; he thought himself guilty in his own apprehension, as you may perceive by his penning of the *51st Psalm*, yet he was not guilty in God's Account, for he assures him, by his *Prophet*, that he had pardoned him.

Why now it being so, that both a *Question*.  
quiet Conscience may be impure, and  
that a troubled Conscience may be a  
clear Conscience, how shall we know  
whether when our Consciences are  
troubled, it be from the Guilt of Sin  
remaining upon them ; or whether,

when they be clear and quiet, it be from the removal of that Guilt?

*How a  
Man may  
know when  
his Con-  
science is  
troubled  
from the  
guilt of  
Sin re-  
maining  
upon it or  
not.*

For *answer* unto this; first, it may be known when a Man's Conscience is troubled from the guilt of Sin remaining upon it, by considering the effects of this Trouble: Doth he find, that when Conscience is disquieted, he is apt to shift off the Trouble by diverting it, and doing what he can to lull Conscience asleep? Doth he neglect Prayer, Reading of the Word, and other Duties and Means that God hath appointed to bring him to a true Repentance for his Sin; if it be so, this Man hath great cause to fear that the trouble of his Conscience proceeds from the Impurity and Defilement of it. Where God will save the Soul, this *trouble of Conscience* works in another manner, and stirs up a Man to Pray, to Hear, to Meditate upon God's Word, where his condition will be stated to his Hand, to follow God in all his Ways and Ordinances, making him restless till he come to know that his Sins are pardoned, and his Wounds healed and closed up by the Blood of Jesus Christ. Now many there are in whom the troubles

troubles of Conscience never produce any good effects, but all their care is how they may divert all troublesome and disquieting Thoughts from themselves, and so they wear off Convictions: Now this Trouble can never produce any saving effect, and is it self produced meerly from that corroding and gnawing Guilt that lies upon Conscience, which a true and genuine Trouble is a means by God appointed to remove.

*Secondly, How may a Man know when Conscience is quiet, whether it be quieted upon God's Grounds, because the Guilt of Sin is removed from it?*

How a  
Man may  
know when  
his Con-  
science is  
quiet, whe-  
ther it be  
because  
guilt of  
Sin is re-  
moved or  
not.

To this I answer; it must be considered, whether quietness of Conscience comes after Trouble; and if Conscience be quiet after Trouble, then you must consider how it came to be quieted. Did you wear it away with other Businesses? Or, did you seek to God by Prayer, and applying of the Promises to your selves? Did you, in the way of God, obtain Peace? Why now if a Man's quietnes that he hath, be got after:

ter Trouble; and if got in God's way, that way that he hath appointed to still and to quiet the Conscience, you may then satisfie your self in it. But whea as you never have been troubled, or having been troubled have worn it off, you may be assured such a *Peace of Conscience* is far worse and more dangerous, than the most horrid Troubles and Disquietments of Conscience that can be.

I come now to the *third general Head* proponnded, and that was to shew you, What great Importance, and of what beneficial Consequence it is to keep our Consciences clear and inoffensive. And in speaking unto this, I shall at once both give you the Reasons of the Point ; Why it should be our continual Endeavour to keep clear Consciences, and also give you Motives to persuade you to the Duty, I shall only name Six. ad sensum

The Excellency of a clear Conscience opened, in six Particulars.

I. It is a most comfortable Relief under false Reproaches and Aspersions that are cast upon us. A good Conscience is only in our own Power, but a good Name is in the Power of every slanderous Tongue to blast ;

blast; and indeed it is a thing almost impossible to keep at once both a good Conscience and a good Name too: The World is shattered and fractured into so many Parties, and each of them of such different Relishes of good and bad, that unless our Actions have as universal a Gust, as according to the *Rabbin's Tradition* the *Israelite's Manna* had, that it had the taste of that which they best fancied, unless our Actions have such a universal Gust, we must of necessity fall under Mis-constructions, Censures and Defamations; for indeed if you observe it, usually our Similitude to others makes them think and speak well of us: Whosoever commends another, commends somewhat that he supposeth at least he hath in himself; and this is the reason of that Woe of our Saviour, *Luke 6. 26. Woe to you when all Men shall speak well of you.* When wick-<sup>26.</sup> ed Men speak well of us it is a Sign we are but too too like them. Even a *Heathen* could say, when he was highly applauded by the vulgar Rout, *What Evil have I done, that these Men praise me?* The very reproaches of ungodly Men, are the best Testimonials that can be given of an excellent and singular

Chri-

Christian. In a strict and holy Conversation there is that contradiction to loose Prophaneness of the World, as at once both convinceth and offends them, reproves them and galls them ; and if we thus reproach them by our Lives, we must again expect that they will reproach us by their Lyings and Slanders. It is a sinful tenderness of our esteem among Men when we tack about with every popular Breath that blows ; such must needs prefer the Praise of Men before the Praise of God ; and let me tell you, this is as fruitless as it is sinful, since as the Wind always blows from contrary Points and Quarters, so while some extol us others will as much vilify and scorn us. It is miserable to live upon the *Reports* and *Opinions* of others ; let us not reckon what they say, but what Reports our own Consciences make us ; it is far better to offend the whole World than God and Conscience : And if any storm of Obloquy, Reproach, Railing or bitter Cursing at any time patters upon us, how sweet then is it to retire inward to the calm Innocency of our own Hearts, where are a thousand Witnesses within us, that tell us we have not deserved them ?

How

How comfortable is it to remit our Cause to God, and leave our Vindication to him for whose sake we suffer Reproach? Thus we find the Prophet *Jeremy* appealing unto God, *Jer. 20.* *Jer. 20.*  
*10, 12. I heard the defaming of many ; 10, 12.*  
*report, say they, and we will report it ;* that is, let us raise a disgraceful and a reproachful Report of him: But, says he, *O Lord of Host, thou that triest the Righteous, thou that seest the Reins and the Heart, unto thee have I opened my Cause !* Why thus if while wicked Men are maliciously conspiring how to blot, fully and stain our Names, if all this while we can keep our Consciences clear, what need we much care how the Wind blows abroad, since we are harboured under the retreat of a peaceful Conscience: They may possibly persuade others to believe their Calumnies; but God, who searcheth the Heart and Conscience, knows that we are injured, and he is hastning forward a Day wherein he will clear up our Righteousness; and then the Testimony of one good Conscience will put ten thousand Slanderers to silence.

Secondly,

**2.** *Secondly, A clear Conscience , as it*

*It gives a will enable a Man to bear Reproaches from  
Man ad-  
vantageto  
reprove  
others  
with Au-  
thority.  
others with Patience, so it gives him ad-  
vantage to reprove others with Authority.  
It is a very true Rule, that he that re-  
proves another, ought himself to be  
free from the Fault he reproves; for  
otherwise his Reproofs neither come  
with freedom from the Reprover, nor  
with efficacy to the Reproved.*

**1.**

*First , A Reproof that comes from a  
guilty Conscience, is but a stammering and  
a timerous Reproof. Such a Man's own  
Conscience must needs rise up in his  
Throat, and choak his Reproofs. Con-  
sciousness of the same Miscarriages will  
retort whatever we can say against  
others, more strongly upon our selves,  
and will suggest to us that it is but Hy-  
pocrisie for us to blame that which we  
our selves practise. With what Face  
canst thou pres others to Repent and  
Reform? What Arguments canst thou  
use to them, who by continuing in the  
same Sins, dost thy self judge those Ar-  
guments are of no force at all? Thus  
Conscience will suggest, and hereby  
Tongue-ties Reproofs.*

*Secondly,*

Secondly, This also makes Reproofs ineffectual. It were indeed a Temper to be wished and pray'd for, that we could only respect how righteous the Reproof is, and not how righteous the Person is that gives it; and if we could be content to have the *Motes* pluck'd out of our own *Eyes*, though it be by such as have *Beams* in their *own Eyes*; for indeed there is no more reason to reject sound Admonitions, because they come from an unsound Heart, than there is to stop our Ears against good CounseL because delivered it may be with an unsavoury Breath. But yet so it is, when Men of polluted Consciences and defiled Conversations come to reprove others, Men are apt to think of them, What, is such a one in earnest? Doth he not personate his Reproof? Doth he not do as bad or worse himself? Or, doth he envy me my Sins, - and would engross them all to himself, and so the Reproof takes no place at all upon him? But now when a Man of a clear and unspotted Conscience reproves wicked Men, his Reproofs break in upon them with Conviction, Authority and Power, if not to reform them yet at least

least to daunt and silence them: Here is one that reproves Sin, who doubtless believes it to be Evil by his own avoiding of it: Here is one that denounceth Wrath if I repent not, who, doubtless, believes it to be as terrible as he represents it to be, by his own carefulness to escape it. And thus a *clear Conscience* hath great advantage to reprove Sinners successfully, at least to work Conviction upon them, if not to work Reformation in them:

3. *Thirdly, A clear Conscience gives boldness of access unto God.* Guilt is the only thing that abashes the Soul, and makes it both ashamed and afraid to appear in the Presence of God; and therefore we find that as soon as *Adam* had sinned against his Maker, *he hides himself from him*. We may observe it in our selves: What slavish deadness and dejectedness of Heart seizeth upon us when we come to God in Duty, after that we have wronged him by any known Sin? We come with such a misgiving kind of Fear, as if we would not have God take notice that we are before him, and we are still in pain till the Duty be over. But when our Consciences

It gives boldness of access unto God.

sciences are clear, O with what delight do we hast to God, and with what content do we stay with him ! How doth the Soul dilate and spread it self under the Smiles of God , beating full upon it ?  
*Loe, O Lord, here's a Heart that I labour to make and keep void of Offence, do thou fill it with thy promised Grace and Spirit ; it is not indeed a Mansion pure enough for the pure and holy God, yet is it such as thou wilt accept of and dwell in ; there are still many hidden Corruptions in it, but do thou search them out, and thou who hast kept thy Servant from presumptuous Sins, do thou also cleanse me from secret Faults.*

Thus a clear Conscience, with a holy and reverend Boldness, addresses it self to God , and sweetly closeth up every Duty and every Prayer , with full assurance of being heard and accepted, and that it shall obtain Mercy from God . So the Apostle tells us , *Heb. 10. 10. 22. Let us, says he, draw near in full assurance of Faith.*

How may we gain this full assurance, when we draw near to God ? How, says he ? Why, by having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience ; get but a pure and clear Conscience, and that will enable you to draw near to God in full assurance of

A a                      Faith.

<sup>1 John 3.</sup> <sup>21.</sup> Faith. And so in the like parallel place, *1 John 3. 21. Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* If Conscience be not evil to accuse us, then have we confidence towards God: When the Face of a Man's Conscience looks cheerful and hath no Frowns and Wrinkles upon it, this makes us joyfully to apprehend that God's Face to us is calm and serene too, and that we shall be welcom at all times into our Father's presence; this Conscience suggests to us, and makes us come with a holy, yet with an awful boldness unto God.

4.  
It is the  
sweetest  
Bosom  
Friend  
with which  
we may at  
all times  
freely and  
intimately  
converse.

Fourthly, *A clear Conscience is the sweetest bosom Friend with which we may at all times freely and intimately converse.* Wicked Men indeed of all Company in the World, do most hate themselves for Companions; they have a lowring and a rumbling Conscience at home that always threatens and disquiets them, and therefore they love to keep abroad. Soliloquies and Heart-discoveries are a very Torment to them, and they wonder that the *Psalmist* should ever bid them *Commune with their own Psal. 4. 4. Hearts and be still,* as it is in *Psal. 4. 4. Why*

Why, alas, they are never less still than when they discourse with their own Hearts and Consciences, which are grown so peevish and quarrelsome, that they thunder out nothing but Woes and Curses against them, hurling about them Swords and Fire-brands and Death, that they dare not so much as once look within Doors. But now a Christian whose *Conscience* is *calm* and *clear*, he finds it the best Companion of the World: In his solitary Retirements from the crowd and noise of the World, with what Delight doth he call his Heart aside, and there are they sweetly and peaceably conferring together! And God usually comes in as a third Friend and joins himself in Society with them, and here pass mutual Endearments between them; the Soul embraces and clasps about God with the Arms of Faith and Dependence, and God embraceth the Soul in the Arms of his everlasting Love. Here are mutual unfoldings of Secrets; the Soul unlocks its Secrets before God, and God again reveals the Secrets of his Love unto the Soul: Here are mutual Rejoycings; the Soul rejoiceth in God its Saviour, and God rejoiceth over the Soul to do it

A a 2 good;

good; and under these Intercourses of Love and Sweetness, the Soul is ready to faint away and dissolve with Joy. This is that *continual Feast*, as the wise *Man* calls it, that a good Conscience entertains a *Christian* with, where all is transacted with a still and noiseless Mirth.

5.  
It is the  
best Com-  
fort and  
Support in  
the midst  
of Dan-  
gers.

Fifthly, *A clear Conscience is the best comfort and support, when Fears, Troubles and Dangers are on every side encompassing us about.* It is a blessed Thing when we have Trouble without, to have Peace within in our own Bosoms, then to have Peace with God and Peace with our selves. And therefore says Christ, *John 16. 33. These Things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace; in the World you shall have Tribulation:* A strange Paradox; but indeed a Christian is made up of such strange Paradoxes, as *Sorrowful, yet always Rejoycing;* as *Poor himself, yet making many Rich;* as *having Nothing, and yet Possessing all Things,* as the Apostle speaks *2 Cor. 6. 10.* Here is Tribulation in the World, and yet here is Peace also. When once the great and bloody Quarrel betwixt God and the Soul is taken up and compounded, when we are reconciled

conciled to God, and thereby our Consciences become reconciled to us ; all the Enmity and Persecution of the World are but little peltring Differences, that cannot disturb that solid and inviolable Peace that a Christian enjoys : This is that Peace that as the Friendship of the World cannot give, so neither can the Enmity of the World ever take away. *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, let not your Hearts be troubled.* It is observable of Josiah, 2 Kings 22. 20. God promised there by the Mouth of Hulda the Prophetess, that he should be gathered to his Grave in Peace ; and yet in the next Chapter, Verse 29. it is said there, *That he was slain in the War which he undertook against Pharaoh Necho King of Egypt* ; he was slain in War, and yet died in Peace, and no wonder ; for whosoever dies in Peace with God and in Peace with his own Conscience, dies peaceably, though he dies in the midst of Wars and Tumults.

Sixthly, *A clear Conscience affords sweet and unspeakable Comfort in a dying hour.* When all Things must take their leave of us and we of them, when in a dying hour, It is an unspeakable comfort to have a clear Conscience.

Death is setting all its Terrors in Array against us, O what a blessed Support will it then be to the departing Soul, standing on Tip-toe ready to take its Flight into Eternity, to be able to make that Appeal which Hezekiah doth,

*Isa. 38. 3. Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* Such a Testimony as this is, at such a time as this is, is worth Heaven and Glory it self; this is to have Heaven let down into us one hour, and to be our selves taken up into Heaven the next hour. Now possibly Men may frolick away their Days in Sin and Vanity, and live as if they should never give an account; but believe it, the Day and Hour is coming, and it will come, wherein Conscience will begin to open its Eyes, when it may be their Friends stand round about them to close theirs, and then it will see these horrid Shapes of Death and Hell and Wrath eternal, such as while they were secure Sinners they never imagined, and now that they are awakned Sinners, and possibly awakned too late too, they can never escape. If therefore you would enjoy

*Peace*

Peace and Serenity in your Death, and have the Testimony of your Consciences to carry with you to shew to your Judge for your Acquittance, be sure then to cherish a good Conscience in your Life-time. Now it may be Conscience may be bribed to give in a false and flattering Testimony, but when Eternity is in its view it will then speak Truth; and O thrice happy are they to whom a true Conscience becomes then an excusing Conscience. And so much for the third Thing propounded, namely, of what concernment it is to labour, *to keep Consciences void of Offence.*

*Fourthly*, the next Thing propounded was, To give you some Rules and Directions how you may get, and also how you may keep clear and inoffensive Consciences.

-4-

But you will say, It is in vain to Objec.  
give Rules for that which is impossible  
to be done ; Doth not the *wise Man*  
challenge all the World upon this Point,  
*Prov. 20. 9. Who can say I have made my  
Heart clean, I am pure from my Sins?*  
Never did the raging *Sea* cast up more  
Mire and Filth than the Heart of Man

A a 4                    doth ;

doth ; and as soon may we empty the vast Waters of the great Deep, and scour the bottom of it from all its Dirt and Mud, as attempt to keep Conscience clear, into which a sinful Heart is continually emptying and pouring out its Filth and Mire.

*Answ.* To this I *Answer* ; Were it impossible, yet there is no release to our Obligation : We are commanded *To be holy even as God is holy*, whose infinite Purity is such as stains the Heavens themselves, and puts the glorious Angels out of Countenance : This Perfection is much more impossible for us who are but Lumps of Dirt mingled and kneaded together with Sin, than for a thick Clod of Earth to be as transparent as the Sun that shines ; but yet these accessive Commands have a use in them, even to raise up our Endeavors to a higher pitch and strain, than if we were commanded only somewhat that were within our own Power ; as he that aims at a Star is like to shoot higher, than he that aims only at a *Turf*. Thus, though it were impossible to keep *clean Consciences void of Offence both towards God and Men*, according to the exactness of God's Com-

Command, yet he that is careful to avoid all Pollutions, both of Flesh and Spirit, shall certainly have a much cleaner Conscience by far than he that wallows in those Sins. In a foul way it is perhaps impossible to keep our selves from being bespattered with Dirt, yet he that walks warily and carefully comes cleaner home than he that tumbles and rolls himself in it: But yet this Duty is not impossible; it is indeed difficult to keep a clear Conscience, but yet it is a thing that is fæsible: And in general there are two ways to keep our Consciences clear; either by preserving them from being defiled, or else by cleansing them when they are defiled.

First, *We may keep our Consciences clear by preserving them from being defiled.* You will say, How can this be? Is there any Man living, says the wise Man, *that doth good, and sinneth not?* And doth not every Sin leave behind it a spot and stain upon the Face of Conscience? How then can we keep them clear?

I.

I An-

I Answer; Sins are of two sorts; there are Sins that are *Crimes*, and there are Sins that are but *Faults*. Crimes I call those Sins that are branded for infamous both by God and Man, as *Murder*, *Adultery*, *Blasphemy*, and the like, at which even natural Conscience recoils, such carnal Sins as affright Conscience and make it look pale and ghastly. A *Crime* I also call any sin that is substantiated by an access of Guilt by the dreadful Aggravations of being committed knowingly and wilfully. By *Faults* I mean Sins of daily Infirmitie and Surreption, such as do frequently surprize the best and the holiest Christians, from which no Man's Piety nor Watchfulness can secure him. Why, now though we be over-taken with *Faults*, and every Day and Hour contract new and fresh Guilt upon our Consciences, yet we may have clear and good Consciences while we are careful to keep our selves from *Crimes*, from all Sins that are so in their own Nature by the horridness of the Fact, and from all Sins that are made so by greatning Circumstances of being deliberate and wilful; while we keep our selves from

from these we have good Consciences, notwithstanding Sins of ordinary Weakness: That Man hath a good Conscience who preserves himself from all infamous and gross Sins, and from all other wilful and deliberate Sins. Now this *clearness of Conscience* is a thing possible to be attained; Men may, with care and caution, keep themselves free from all self-condemning *Crimes*, and live so evenly that when their Consciences are most peevish and toutchy, yet they shall have nothing to accuse them of, but what is common to all Men; of such Men as these, this we may affirm, that they have been able with Joy to reflect back upon their past Lives in a dying hour, that possibly never knew any Guilt by themselves, than what the Sins of common and daily Infirmitie hath expos'd them unto. This now is to keep good Consciences. *We live well*, says St. Austin, *if we live without Crimes*; *to live without Fault is impossible*, and he that thinks he doth it, keeps himself not from Sin but from Pardon.

Secondly, *Another way to keep our Consciences clear, is by cleansing them when they are defiled.* He keeps his Garments clean.

clean that keeps himself from falling ; and next degree, he who being fallen hastes to cleanse himself from his contracted Filth : And thus, at least, we may keep our Consciences clear both from *Crimes* and from *Faults* also, while we labour to cleanse them from their Defilements, and to rub out and wash away those Spots with which at any time we are occasionally bespatter'd. There is a twofold Blot Sin leaves behind it, there is a Blot of Discredit and a Blot of Defilement ; the former is indelible : As the Scar remains when the Wound is healed ; so this Blot remains upon the Soul, when the Guilt of Sin is removed. It is a Discredit to a *Malefactor*, though pardoned, that ever he should do that which deserv'd Death : And so it is a kind of Blot upon a Christian's Name for ever, to have committed those Sins that have deserved eternal Death, though through the free Mercy and unspeakable Grace of God he hath obtained the Pardon of them. But then there is another Blot, a Blot of Defilement, that renders Men loathsom and deformed in the Eyes of God ; and thus every Sin we commit leaves a Blot and a Stain upon the Soul ; a Stain that defaceth

defaceth God's Image, and that defiles our own Consciences; and when this Stain and Blot is cleansed, then are we said to have *clear Consciences*, when we have taken off that Blot and Defilement that Sin hath left, whereby we are rendered deformed in the sight of God, and whereby the Image of God is defaced upon the Soul. Thus you see in general there are two ways to keep a clear Conscience; the one by preventing its Defilement, and the other by cleansing of it when it is defiled. Now to help you in both these Cases, I shall lay down several Particulars.

Directions  
for the  
getting  
and keep-  
ing of a  
clear Con-  
science.

First, If you would have your Consciences clear, get them rightly informed. How can Conscience be clear, so long as the Fogs and thick Mists of Ignorance and Error possels it? Labour, therefore, to let in spiritual Light into it, that you may see how to cleanse it. It is as much Vanity to go about to cleanse an ignorant Conscience, as it is in vain to sweep a dark Room. An ignorant, conscientious Man, that knows not the Limits of Sin and Duty, may, after a great deal of pudder with his Conscience, leave it much worse than

I.

Get Con-  
science  
rightly in-

than he found it, and cast out Jewels instead of Rubbish: Indeed it is impossible for an ignorant Man to have a good Conscience, whether we respect Duty or Comfort; in point of Duty I have shewed you formerly that Ignorance will make Conscience unnecessarily scrupulous, or daringly presumptuous: Now neither can an ignorant Conscience be good in respect of Comfort, because through Ignorance Conscience oftentimes quarrels at that which is a true Ground of Rejoycing. *Conscience* is that Glass whereby we may both view our selves, and also our Actions: Now as a Glass, when falsely framed, represents a beautiful Face monstrous and frightful, so Conscience, when falsely informed, makes even lovely Actions appear mishapen and terrifying, by distorted Representations of those Things that are lawful, and perhaps our Duty also. Therefore in the first place, get an enlightened Conscience if you would get a good Conscience;

Prov. 19.

2. *That the Soul be without knowledge, it is not good; or, as some Translations have it, a Soul without knowledge is not good; it is indeed good for nothing, unless*

less it be to make Men sin conscientiously, and to embolden them to commit the greatest Wickedness in the World with Peace and Comfort. Thus, says our Saviour, John 16. 2. *Whosoever killeth you shall think that he doth God good Service*, through the Error and Mistake of their Conscience. So in 1 Cor. 2. 8. *Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* Knowledge betters the Conscience two ways.

John 16.2

*Knowledge betters the Conscience two ways.*

First, It gives its direction what to choose and what to avoid, it instructs it to discern betwixt Good and Evil. Ignorant Persons often mistake the one for the other, and eschew what they should follow; or if they chance to do that which is good, as it is not of great worth to do good only by chance and hazard, so they sin also in doing good; while the Judgment is in suspence, the Conscience must needs be under Guilt. If I know not whether I ought to do an Action or to forbear, which way soever I take I am entangled in Sin, for *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*: That is, whatsoever is done with a wavering Conscience that I know not whether it be sinful or not,

I.  
By instruc-  
ting of it  
to discern  
betwixt  
Good and  
Evil.

not, that thereby becomes Sin ; and whatever a Man doth doubtingly, he is damned if he doth it ; *He that eats doubtingly, says the Apostle, is damned if he eats, Rom. 14. 23.*

2. Secondly, Knowledge gives the Con-

science Strength to enforce us to the doing of that which it discovers to be Good, and us to the Flight of that which it discovers to be Evil. A knowing Person cannot sin so easily as an ignorant Man may, but he must struggle and wrestle harder, and offer more Violence by far to his own Conscience. A Man that sees his Danger before him will hardly be dragg'd into Precipices, whereas one that is blind is easily led thither suspecting nothing. So here, a knowing Person, that sees the Danger of Hell and Damnation before him, if he sins it must be with a great deal of inward reluctancy : An enlightened Conscience struggles and with-holds him ; and if Temptation be so violent as to wrest him out of the Hand of Conscience, how is he wrackt and torn in pieces betwixt Conscience and Temptations ; and when Conscience hath lost its hold, still it pursues him and follows him to his Sin and disturbs his Pleasure, and

and imbibters that Sweetnes that he thought to have found in Sin before, and never leaves its Clamors till it hath at least by a hypocritical and formal Repentance, and by Engagements to be more observing of the Commands of Conscience for the future, satisfied and appeased it. This force Conscience hath when it is duly informed with Knowledge. But where Ignorance hath blinded it, it suffers Men quietly to rush upon God's Neck, and *upon the thick bosses of his Buckler*; it sees not, neither respects any Danger when it is even on the very brink of Hell. An ignorant Person is like your benighted or bewildred Traveller, which because it cannot see its own Way before it, what is to be chosen and what is to be refused, it lays the Reins upon the Neck of Men's Lusts, and suffers them without controul to take their own course. And therefore if you would have good Consciences, get them rightly informed with the knowledge of what is Sin, and what is Duty.

Secondly, *If you would have a clear Conscience, then cast out the filth of Conscience by a daily and frequent Confession.* one of the Fathers calls it **B b** Cast out the filth of Conscience by a daily and frequent Confession.

2.

the Vomit of the Soul, whereby it easeth it self when it is over-charged and glutted with Sin and Guilt. And so the Scripture also speaks, when the Apostle speaks of Apostates relapsing back again into their old Sins. In 2 Pet. 2. 22. he saith, *They return with the Dog to his Vomit*; that is, they return and do again lick up those Sins which before they disgorged and cast up by Confession. This indeed is the Way when Conscience is burnded with the Guilt of any Sin; when Sin lies uncocted and heavy within, go then and pour out your Heart before the Lord in the Confession of your Sin; see what sudden Ease this will bring in to Conscience. David was Sin-sick, and he resolves upon this course, Psal. 32. 5. I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and my Iniquity have I not hid; I said I would confess my Transgression, and suddenly there came Ease to his Conscience, and thou, O Lord, says he, forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin. Are our Consciences oppressed with the Burden and Weight of great and numberless Sins? Here we may, by an humble and penitent Confession, unload them all before God; and this is the Mystery of Confession;

the

the way to unload our Sins from off us, is by taking them upon our selves; when we charge our selves with them and impute them to our selves, God will not impute them to us, but charge them upon Christ; for he hath promised, *If we judge and condemn our selves, we shall not be judged and condemned.*

Thus in 2 Sam. 12. 13. as soon as David <sup>2 Sam.</sup> there, by an humble Confession, <sup>12. 13.</sup> then his Sin to himself, saying, *I have sinned*; God, by the Prophet, tell him, *that he had taken away his Sin from him*: The Lord, also says the Prophet to him, *thou put away thy Sin*. And, indeed, have we not found it thus by manifold Experiences, that when Conscience hath been bowed down by the unsupportable Weight of the Guilt of Sin, have ye not found that a sorrowful and ingenuous Confession of them unto God hath lightned the Burden? And whereas before, Conscience was heavy and doomy, now it looks chearfully upon you, under the apprehensions of God's pardoning Grace, that God will pardon and forgive them to us. Now this easing of our Consciences by Confession must be frequently reiterated; our Consciences are always filling with Sin and

B b 2                      Guilt,

the Vomit of the Soul, whereby it easeth it self when it is over-charged and glutted with Sin and Guilt. And so the Scripture also speaks, when the Apostle speaks of Apostates relapsing back again into their old Sins. In 2 Pet. 2. 22. he saith, *They return with the Dog to his Vomit*; that is, they return and do again lick up those Sins which before they disgorged and cast up by Confession. This indeed is the Way when Conscience is burnded with the Guilt of any Sin; when Sin lies uncocted and heavy within, go then and pour out your Heart before the Lord in the Confession of your Sin; see what sudden Ease this will bring in to Conscience. David was Sin-sick, and he resolves upon this course, Psal. 32. 5. I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and my Iniquity have I not hid; I said I would confess my Transgression, and suddenly there came Ease to his Conscience, and thou, O Lord, says he, forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin. Are our Consciences oppressed with the Burden and Weight of great and numberless Sins? Here we may, by an humble and penitent Confession, unload them all before God; and this is the Mystery of Confession;

the

the way to unload our Sins from off us, by taking them upon our selves; when we charge our selves with them and impute them to our selves, God will not impute them to us, but charge them upon Christ; for he hath promised, *If we judge and condemn our selves, we shall not be judged and condemned.*

Thus in 2 Sam. 12. 13. as soon as David <sup>2 Sam.</sup> there, by an humble Confession, <sup>12. 13.</sup> then his Sin to himself, saying, *I have sinned;* God, by the Prophet, tells him, *that he had taken away his Sin from him:* The Lord, also says the Prophet to him, *I have put away thy Sin.* And, indeed, have we not found it thus by manifold Experiences, that when Conscience hath been bowed down by the unsupportable Weight of the Guilt of Sin, have ye not found that a sorrowful and ingenuous Confession of them unto God hath lightned the Burden? And whereas before, Conscience was heavy and gloomy, now it looks cheerfully upon you, under the apprehensions of God's pardoning Grace, that God will pardon and forgive them to us. Now this easing of our Consciences by Confession must be frequently reiterated; our Consciences are always filling with Sin and

B b 2                      Guilt,

Guilt, and therefore we must be always casting of it out by Confession. As in the emptying of a Pond, where there are many Streams rising and bubbling up, if we stop and intermit the Work, the *Pond* grows presently full again. Truly our Hearts and Consciences are like such *Ponds*, in which there are many corrupt Streams still sprouting up; now Confession is the Laving of it out, which if we do but a while intermit, our Consciences again grow as full of Sin and Guilt as ever; and therefore it must be a frequent and daily Confession of Sin, yea, our Confession must be reiterated as often as we fall into and commit any Sin. And that is another Means to keep our Consciences clear.

I might also add, *That an effectual Means to keep the Conscience clear, is frequently to wash it with repenting Tears:* But because unfeigned Confession of Sin doth also include and suppose a penitential Frame of Heart, I shall not, therefore, insist upon this as a particular Head.

In the *Third Place*, therefore, *If you would keep your Consciences clear and inoffensive, then labour to get a mean and low esteem of the World.* The inordinate Love of the present World is utterly inconsistent with a good Conscience: What is it that makes so many offer Violence to their Consciences, to stretch and wrack them to any base compliance or sinful practice, but only that they may thereby gain some secular Advantage, or that they may thereby avoid some worldly Inconvenience? This is that which fills the World with Fraud and Cozenage, with Rapine and Extortion, while all tug hard to get one from another, although they lose their Consciences in the Scuffle. This is that which makes Men so often shift their Sails, that they may run before every Wind that blows: If Times grow ruff and tempestuous, and they must throw over-Board either their Gain or their Godliness, this inordinate Love of the World persuades them to make *Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience*, only that they may bear up in the World. Now they that have but a low and mean esteem of the World, such as it deserves,

escape this Temptation, and they can with a holy Generousness scorn to prostitute their Consciences, and to barter their precious Souls for the Gain of any of these fading and perishing Riches here below, Riches that perish in the using. If therefore you would keep good *Consciences*, learn to despise the Threats and Frowns, the Flatterings and Fawnings of this World; look upon it as of no great concernment to you, whatever in Adversity or Prosperity can happen to you in this short and frail Life. Reflect upon those who groan under the Terrors of a wounded Conscience; all the World cannot give them one moments Ease or Comfort; yea, had they the whole World at their dispose they would give it all to procure Peace, yea, but a Truce for a while with their own Consciences; such a vain and contemptible Thing is the World in comparison of inward Tranquility and Serenity of Mind. Why now thus to rate the World below the Peace and Quietness of our own Consciences, is an excellent Means to preserve them clear and peaceable.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, If you would keep Conscience dear, labour above all things to strengthen your Faith. Faith is a purifying Grace.

*Acts 15. 9. Purifying their Hearts by*

Faith. Now Faith hath a double Influence to purifie the Heart or Conscience.

4.

*your Faith.*

First, A dogmatical Faith keeps the Conscience clear and pure, and that morally.

I.

As it is a dogmatical Faith, and so it doth it morally.

Secondly, A justifying and a saving Faith purifies the Conscience, and that mystically.

First, A dogmatical Faith keeps the Conscience clear and pure. A dogmatical Faith I call that which hath for its Object the whole revealed Truth of God; and it is nothing but a firm, undoubting Assent to the Verity and Certainty of whatever is contained in the Holy Scriptures, upon no other Account and Reason, than meerly the Authority and Veracity of God, who is the Author of it. This is a dogmatical or an historical Faith, which though it be not Justifying, as the Papists hold, yet is it of

I.

What a dogmatical Faith is.

a mighty Influence to sanctifie the Heart, and to keep the Conscience and Conversation inoffensive, and this it doth in a moral way : For did but Men believe that Heaven is so unconceivably glorious, sparkling with Light, flowing with Pleasure, resounding with Praises, a Place where Joy and Bliss ever dwells, and where we shall dwell too in an endless Eternity in the Smiles and Love of God, if now but for a few short Years we strive to live holily ; did we but as really believe these Things to be true and certain , as we know those Things to be true and certain that we see with our very Eyes, what manner of Christians would this force us to be in all Holiness and Godliness of Conversation, cleansing our selves from all Pollutions both of Flesh and Spirit ? Wherefore is it that the Promise of some temporal Reward , the hopes of some mean Preferment from some great Person , is of Force sufficient to make Men obsequious to them ? And yet the Promises that God himself hath made of Heaven and Glory (in comparison of which to promise Crowns and Scepters, is but to promise Pebbles and Gugaws) work so little effect upon the

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generality of Men, to allure them from Sin to a holy Life? Whence is it, but that Men believe not that Heaven is so glorious as the Scripture describes it to be? Nay, indeed, if they would speak their Minds, they are not yet sure whether there be a Heaven or not, it is from their Unbelief: Did Men but believe the insupportable Wrath of God, those Horrors and Torments, that Fire and Sulphur, that Stench and Darkness, those burning Chains and those fiery Whips, the Woe and Anguish of the Damned in Hell, which are as far from being utterable as they are from being tollerable, did they as certainly believe these Things, as if they believe them not they shall certainly feel them, would they dare still to venture on to *treasure up Wrath to themselves against the day of Wrath?* Would they still dare, by wounding their Consciences, now enrage them to their own Wounding and Smart for ever hereafter? Would they dare to do it, did they believe these Things? Did they but believe that Conscience will be revenged seven fold on them for all the Wrongs and Violence that they have done it: This *Worm*, that they now carry in their Breasts

Breasts frozen and benum'd, shall be heated by the Fire of Hell, and fly upon them and sting their Souls with a burning and flaming Anguish : Did they believe this, would they not be careful to give no *Offence* to their *Consciences*? Would they not be as careful to avoid all Sin, that arms the Terrors of Hell against them, as they have Reason to think a *damned Wretch in Hell*, who hath had the Experience of these Things would do, if God would release him out of it, with a Promise that he shall for ever escape it, upon the same Terms that he hath promised us? Think with yourselves, what effect the Sense and Feeling of those dreadful Things would have upon such a one, to make him rigorously conscientious, that in nothing he provoke so terrible a God, or offend and irritate a revenging Conscience, that will be sure to repay him home sevenfold into his own Bosom ; why the same carefulness and circumspection would it work in all of us, did we as firmly and strongly believe those Things to be true, as God hath evidently and clearly revealed them to be true in his Word. It is true, these Things we all know, and we persuade our

our selves that we do believe them. Do we not profess to believe that *Jesus Christ* shall judge both *Quick* and *Dead*, and that all shall receive Rewards according to their Works, those that have done Well shall receive the Reward of eternal Life, and those that have done Ill the Reward of eternal Death : These Things we may indeed profess to believe, and these Things we may frequently represent to our own Thoughts ; but the weak and small Influence that these Things have to over-awe our Consciences, evinceth clearly that this is not Faith but Fancy : It is a wavering, un-evident Opinion that we have taken up, and that we call by the Name of Faith ; for did we live in the Belief of these Truths, we should no more dare to sin against our Consciences, than if we saw *Hell* flaming before these Eyes of ours, and knew that upon the next Sin we commit we were to be cast into it. And thus you see a *dogmatical Faith* is a great Help to purifie the Heart, and to keep the Conscience clear and inoffensive.

Secondly,

2.

As Faith  
justifies,  
so it puri-  
fies the  
*Conscience*  
mystically.

2. *A justifying Faith also is of great use to purifie the Conscience:* And this it doth not morally, by any natural Influence or Efficacy of its own, but only mystically, as it applies to the Soul the Blood of Jesus Christ, that Blood that alone takes away the Defilement of our Sins. An historical Faith may keep the Soul from contracting Defilement, but this *justifying*, this *saving Faith*, washes out the Stains and Defilements that we have contracted, and makes us white and spotless in the Blood of the Lamb. Faith is that Conveyance that God hath appointed to bring the Blood of Christ to stream forth upon the defiled Soul and Conscience; and upon every renewed Act of Sin we ought, by a renewed Act of Faith, to lay our spotted and defiled Souls under the fall of that Fountain that is set open to wash and cleanse us from our Filth and Pollution. Thus Faith cleanseth the Conscience mystically; and by the Actions of Faith, we may thus get and keep our Consciences clear and inoffensive.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, If you would keep your Consciences clear, then set a strict Watch and Guard upon your selves, both upon your inward and upon your outward Man. Set a Guard to your Heart, and to all the Approaches to your Heart.

I. Keep a narrow Guard upon your Heart. The Heart is the great meeting Place, where Objects, Thoughts and Affections do swarm and crowd together: And as much Concourse leaves Dirt behind it upon the Place, so this great Heart-Assembly usually leaves it foul and polluted. Our Saviour, *Mark 9.* tells the Jews, That it was that which was within them, that Wickedness which lay latent in their Hearts, *that which proceedeth from the Heart that defiles the Man.* There is a Defilement in the Thoughts and in the Desires, as well as in the more gross and bulky Sins of the Life: Hence the Prophet *Jeremy* speaks, *Jer. 4. 14.* O Jerusalem, wash thine Heart from Wickedness! Why wherewith is it polluted? Why the next Words shew it; *How long shall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee?* Vain Thoughts leave a Stain and Contagion upon

upon the Soul ; and certainly if a vain Thought, that is such a fleeting and voluntary Thing, breaths a kind of Contagion and Taint upon the Heart, they certainly then must have foul Hearts indeed and their Spots in Grain, who lie soaking and stewing themselves in Unclean, Malicious and Covetous Thoughts and Designs. Since then that *Conscience* is apt to receive Taint, but with the breathing of a vain and sinful Thought upon it, how doth it concern us then to keep a watchful and circum-spect Eye over every Motion of our Hearts ? It is the *wise Man's* Counsel as you have heard ; *Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the Issues of Life.* Look to it, therefore, that you suffer not your Hearts to be defiled with sinful Thoughts or sinful Affections, by those inward and invisible Corruptions that settle at the bottom of it ; though the Life be never so clear and cristal, yet if that Mud be but stirred and raised, *Conscience* becomes thereby defiled and an evil Conscience. And therefore the Apostle, *1 Tim. 1. 5.* joins them together, speaking of a *pure Heart and a good Conscience* ; but if the steems of Lust rise up thick in the Heart, they  
defile

defile and pollute the Conscience. Hence the Apostle again joins them together, *Tit. i. 15.* a defiled Mind and <sup>Tit. i. 15:</sup> a defiled Conscience ; *The Mind and Conscience,* says he, *is defiled.* How can the Mind be defiled, unless it be with Sins of the Mind ? Evil Thoughts and evil Affections, which as sprightly and aerial as they seem to be, yet they leave a Stain upon the Conscience : As the breathing upon a Glass fullies it, and dims the Representation of the Face that looks into it ; so the breathing of evil Cogitations upon *Conscience*, the Glass of the Soul, leaves a Mist and Cloud upon it, that it can but dimly and darkly represent to us our true State.

2. *Watch diligently as the Heart it self, so all the Approaches unto the Heart.* Watch diligently all the Approaches to the Heart. The Approaches to the Heart are like your Roads to a great City, which are full of Passengers, and usually full of Dirt also : And these are the Sensors by which and through which Objects are continually travelling to the Heart, and carry with them a World of Wickedness. These are Sluces, which instead of letting in pleasant Streams to refresh, com-

commonly they let in nothing but Mud, which pollutes the Soul. There is no actual Filthiness in the Hearts of any but what enters in by these Inlets ; through these the *Devil* casts in abundance of Filth, stirs up and increaseth indwelling Lust, and, by sinful Objects that the Senses convey to the Soul, dungs that Ground that is of it self but too too fruitful. Thus the *Devil* makes use of the Ear, through it he blows up the Bladder of Pride, by the Breath of popular Applause and Praise. And thus he makes use of the lascivious Eye as a *burning Glass* to set the Heart on Fire ; and so also he makes use of the other Senses as Sinks of Luxury and Intemperance. Now if you would keep your Consciences *clear* and *undefiled*, set a strict Guard and narrow Watch upon all these Passages to your Hearts ; critically examin every Thing that goes in, and every Thing that comes out by these Gates ; arrest whatever cannot produce its Pass and Warrant from the Word of God ; keep the same Watch upon these Gates, that God would keep on the Gate of the *Heavenly City*, the *New Jerusalem*. It

*Rev. 21.27* is said, *Rev. 21. 27.* *That there shall in no wise*

wise enter into it any thing that defileth.  
Why so let us who would keep our  
Consciences clear, guard all the Ap-  
proaches to them with the same strict-  
ness, and let nothing that defileth enter  
in by these Approaches to our Hearts.

*Sixthly and Lastly, take this Direction, Be sure to listen to the Voice of Conscience.* Those that stop their Ears and will not hear Conscience when it directs and reproves, shall be sure to hear it loud enough when it shall accuse and condemn them. Conscience is the Voice of God in the Soul ; why now if this Voice be slighted, beware lest the next time it speak to you in Thunder. Do nothing contrary to the Dictates of your Consciences; for this will provoke God to give you up to a reprobate Sense, and judicially to harden you in your Sins ; for if sinning against your Consciences doth not corrupt them by making them insensible and stupid, it will certainly corrupt them by making them enraging and despairing.

Well now, for your Encouragement, let me tell you, while you are careful by following these Directions to keep

your *Consciences* clear , you shall also keep them peaceable. It is the foulness of a *Gun* that makes it recoil in discharging: And so it is the foulness of Men's *Consciences* that makes them recoil back again upon them in discharging of their Offices. But while *Conscience* is kept clear and void of Offence, it will be also kept free from quarrelling with you, and from accusing and condemning of you. So much for this Time and Text.

A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON  
**P**erseverance  
IN  
P R A Y E R:  
WITH  
Exhortations thereunto.

ON  
I T H E S S A L . v. 17.

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By **EZEKIEL HOPKINS;**  
Late Lord Bishop of *London-derry.*

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A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON  
Perseverance  
IN  
P R A Y E R.

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1 THESS. v. 17.

*Pray without ceasing.*

THIS Text is one of those many Commands that the *Apostle* lays down in this *Chapter*; being now almost at the end and close of his *Epistle*, and not willing to omit the mentioning of Duties so necessary for their Practice, he pours them out in short, but weighty Exhortations; the Connexion betwixt most of them is dark (if

C c 3 there

there be any) : I shall not therefore vex the Words, by tacking them either to the precedent or subsequent *Verses* by any forced Coherence, but take them as they are in themselves in one entire Proposition, and so they contain in them a Duty, and that is, *Prayer*; and the manner also of performing of it, and that is, *without ceasing*; and both of these do administer to us this plain Doctrin.

Doctrin. *That it is a Christians Duty to pray incessantly.* This is a plain and necessary Point, and I intend to handle it in as plain and familiar a Method. And there are two Things that I shall enquire into.

1. First, *What it is to Pray.* And then,
2. Secondly, *What it is to Pray without ceasing.*

I. I shall begin with the First, *What it is to Pray.*

I Answer; *To Pray is, by the Assistance and Help of the Holy Ghost, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ with Faith*

Faith and Fervency, to make an humble representation of our Desires unto God for those Things that are according to his Will, with Submission to his Pleasure, and with reference to his Honour.

This is that holy Duty of Prayer, in which, of all that belong to Religion, the Soul usually enjoys the most near and sweet Communion with God. When we are oppressed with Guilt, or overwhelmed with Fears and Griefs, what sweeter Retreat than to betake our selves to our God, and to our Father, into whose Bosom we may unload all our Burdens? It is the greatest solace of an afflicted Mind to lie prostrate before the Lord, and melt it self down in holy Tears and in holy Affections at his Feet. Hence it is said of *Hannah*, *1 Sam. 1. 18*. That after she had poured out her Soul before God, *her Countenance was no more sad*. And therefore this is not so much our Duty as our Privilege; it is the Happiness of the glorious Angels in Heaven, and of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, that they are always near unto God in their Attendance upon him, that they are Waiters about his Throne: And

*Prayer* gives to us the very same high Privilege, and brings us into the Presence and before the Throne of the same God ; only with this difference, they draw near to a Throne of Glory, and we draw near to a Throne of Grace.

Let us now take a more particular View of this excellent Duty of *Prayer*, according to the Description given of it.

I.  
The efficient cause of Prayer is the *Holy Ghost*; then we Pray when we breath out those Requests unto God, that the *Holy Ghost* hath breathed unto us; and therefore it is said, *Rom. 8. 26.*  
*Rom. 8. 26.* *The Spirit helpeth our Infirmitie*s, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the *Spirit* it self maketh Intercession for us with Sighs and Groans that cannot be uttered. All Prayers that are not dictated by the *Holy Ghost*, is but howling in God's esteem. And though wicked Men, in their Distresses, may be very passionate and very vehement in their Requests, yet they have no Promise that their *Prayers* shall prevail with God. Sometimes indeed God doth

doth hear them, and out of his common Bounty and Goodness grants to them those temporal good Things that they crave ; he that hears the *young Ravens* when they cry, he that hears the *lowing of the Oxen*, sometimes also hears wicked Men under their Afflictions, when they roar to him as *wild Bulls in a Net*, as the Prophet expresteth it ; but yet such Prayers of wicked Men tho' they are answered, yet they are never accepted ; God accepts no Petitions but such as are presented to him through the Intercession of Christ ; now Christ makes Intercession for none in Heaven, but only for such in whose Hearts the Spirit makes Intercession here upon Earth ; their Prayers alone ascend up to God as sweet Incense, being perfumed with that *much Incense* that Christ offers up with the *Prayers of all the Saints*. God always hears and answers them, either in the very Thing that they pray for, or else in what oftentimes is far better, when they ask that which will be to their own Hurt ; then he answers them graciously by denying them. In James 16. the Apostle tells us there, *That the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.* This indeed may

Jam.5.16.

may seem a needless Tautology to say an *effectual Prayer availeth*, for it is but one and the same thing to avail and to be effectual ; but if we consult the Original, we shall find the Words may be translated, *The in-wrought Prayer* ; and possibly we may with more Congruity render it thus, *The Prayer of a righteous Man wrought in him* ; that is to say, by the Spirit of God such a Prayer avail-  
eth much.

Secondly, *As the efficient cause of our Prayers is the Holy Ghost, so the only Object of our Prayers is God* ; for it is a representation of our Wants and Desires unto him. Now God may be consider'd either essentially or personally, and under both respects we may direct our Prayers unto him.

I.  
All the Persons in the Trinity are to be prayed unto.

First, *If we consider the Persons of the glorious Trinity, so they are all adorable with this Act of divine Worship*. None will deny but that we may direct our Prayers unto God the Father ; and that God the Son may be distinctly prayed unto, we have an uncontroulable Instance in that of S. Stephen, Acts 7.59.

Lord

*Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit ; yea, and* <sup>Acts 7.59.</sup> *this Adoration is due not only to the Divine Nature of Christ, which was from all Eternity the same in Being, in Majesty and Glory with the Father ; but it is also due unto Christ as Mediator, as God-Man, and so his humane Nature is also joined in the participation of this high Honour, through its union to the Divine Nature : The very Angels in Heaven are commanded to adore him as God-Man, as Mediator,* <sup>Heb. 1. 6.</sup> *When he bringeth in his first* <sup>Heb. 1. 6.</sup> *begotten into the World ; that is, when he brought him into the World as Man, he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship him. Indeed we no where in Scripture, as I remember, have express mention made of any Prayer directed to the Holy Ghost, yet whosoever allows him to be God cannot deny him this Worship of Prayer ; if we must believe in him, we may then certainly call upon him, as the Apostle argues,* <sup>Rom. 10. 14.</sup> *yea, we have an Instance* <sup>Rom. 10.</sup> *of the Seraphims giving Praise unto him,* <sup>14.</sup> *which is one part of Prayer,* <sup>Isa. 6. 3.</sup> *They cried to one another, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts. This God is the same who in Verses 10, 11. bids the Prophet say*

say to the People, *Hear ye indeed but understand not, make the Heart of this People fat, make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they hear with their Ears and see with their Eyes.* This is that God whom the *Seraphims* adored, and this is that God that spake to the Prophet ; and the Apostle quoting this very place out of *Isaiah*, tells us, *Acts 28. 25.* that it was the *Holy Ghost* spake ; so that by comparing these two Places together, you see plainly that the *Holy Ghost* is God, and that he is to be adored by us with the same Worship that we worship the *Father*, and the *Son*, for the *Holy Ghost* is the *Lord God of Hosts* ; which St. Paul refers to the *Holy Ghost*, well spake the *Holy Ghost* concerning them. Thus if we consider God personally, each Person in the *Trinity* may well be the *Object* of our Prayers.

2. Secondly, Consider God essentially, and  
God essen- so we are also to direct our Prayers to him.  
tially is to  
be prayed unto.  
Now to consider God essentially is to have the Eye of our Faith fixed upon his Attributes, not upon his Person, to consider him when we pray to him, not as *Father*, *Son* or *Holy Ghost*, but only as an infinitely glorious, wise,  
pow-

powerful, gracious God, and the like ; to look upon him as a most pure Essence whose Presence is every where, whose Presence and Goodness is over all Things ; to conceive him to be an infinite Being altogether unconceivable , this is to consider God *essentially*. Now this Notion of God is equally common to all the *Three Persons*, and therefore this is the most fit and congruous way when we come to God in Prayer to represent before us his *Attributes*, we need not select out any one *Person* in the *Holy Trinity*, *Father*, *Son* or *Holy Ghost* to direct our Prayers unto, unless it be in some Cases wherein their particular Offices are more immediately concerned ; but when we pray to him who is Almighty, who is All-wise, infinitely Holy, infinitely Just and Merciful, we pray at once to the whole *Trinity*, both to the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*. So when we pray according to that holy Form that Christ hath taught us, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, Father there denotes not only God the Father, the first Person in the Trinity, but it is a relative Attribute belonging equally to all the Persons in the Trinity. God is the Father of all Men by Creation and Providence,

vidence, and he is especially the Father of the Faithful by Regeneration and Adoption : Why now as these Actions of Creation, Regeneration and Adoption are common to the whole Trinity, so also is the Title of Father common to the whole Trinity ; God the first Person is indeed eminently called the Father, but that is not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ his only begotten Son from all Eternity; in respect of us the whole Trinity *is our Father which art in Heaven*, and when we pray so, we pray both to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, to all the Three Persons ; yea, and it may seem very probable that when Christ prayed, *Matth. 26. 39. Father, if it be possible let this Cup pass from me, nevertheless not my Will but thy Will be done* : I say, it's probable this Prayer was not directed to God the Father personally, but to the whole Trinity ; for we must consider that Christ prays here only as he was Man, and that appears by his distinguishing of his Will from, and submitting it to God's Will. Why now not only God the Father but the whole Trinity was the Father of Christ as Man, yea, Christ himself, according to

Matth.  
26. 39.

to his divine Nature, was the Father of his humane Nature, and therefore praying, as Man, to his Father, that that *Cup might pass from him*, he prayed to all the Three Persons, both to God the Father, and to God the Son, and to God the Holy Ghost. And thus much for the Object to whom we must direct our Prayers, and that is to God only, whether considered personally or essentially.

*Thirdly, Observe also the Matter of our Prayers, It must be a representation of our Desires to God for such Things as are according to his Will.* So we have it, <sup>3.</sup> *If we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.* God's Will in bestowing a desired Mercy upon us is <sup>1 John 5.4.</sup> best known by the Promises that he hath made to us, which Promises are of two Kinds; some refer to temporal Blessings, and others refer to Grace and Glory.

*Why now here First, Grace and Glory are promised absolutely; it is that we are commanded all of us to seek after, and therefore here can lie no mi-* <sup>I.</sup> *We may pray for Grace and Glory absolutely.*

ftake upon us while we beg these, for there is no doubt while we pray for Grace and Glory, but we do it according to the Will of God: Here we may be earnest and importunate that God would sanctifie and save our Souls; and while we ask this, and make this the matter of our Requests, we are under an impossibility of asking amiss; yea, and the more violent we are, and the more resolute to take no Denial at the Hands of God, the more pleasing is this holy Force, since it shews a perfect conformity and concurrence in our Wills unto his Will, who hath told us, *It is*

*1 Thes. 4. his Will, even our Sanctification, 1 Thes. 3.*

4. 3. This was one part of that violence that our *Saviour* saith, *the Kingdom of Heaven suffered in the Days of John the Baptist*. It is an Invasion that is acceptable unto God, when we storm Heaven by *Prayers* and *Supplications*, with strong *Cries* and *Tears*, when we plant against it *unutterable Sighs* and *Groans*, this is such a Battery that those eternal Ramparts cannot hold out long against it. We may pray absolutely for *Grace* and *Glory*.

*Secondly,*

Secondly, Though we may pray thus absolutely, and with a holy peremptoriness for Grace and Glory; saying to the De-God as Jacob to the Angel that wrestled with him, *I will not let thee go until thou hast blessed me with spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Things in Jesus Christ.* Yet, of the Spirit conditionally. Secondly, For the Degrees of Grace and for the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, we must pray conditionally, if the Lord will; for these Things are not absolutely necessary, neither are they absolutely promised to us by God; neither any degree of Grace or any Consolation of the Spirit is absolutely promised to us: But however our Prayers ought to be, so much the more fervent and importunate for these Things, than for outward, temporal Things, by how much these are of far greater concernment than the other.

Thirdly, To pray for outward and worldly Blessings is not contrary to the Will of God, for he hath promised to bestow them: But then as his Promise is conditional, if it may stand with our good, so truly also must our Prayers be conditional, that God would give them to us, if it may stand with his Will and

with our Good ; whatsoever we thus ask we do it according to the Will of God, and we are sure of speeding in our Request, either by the obtaining of our Desires, or by being blessed with a Denial ; for, alas, we are blind and ignorant Creatures, and cannot look into the Designs and Drift of *Providence*, and see how God hath laid in order Good and Evil in his own purpose ; oftentimes we mistake Evil for Good, because of the present appearance of Good that it hath ; yea, so short-sighted are we, that we can look no farther than outward and present appearance ; but God, who sees through the whole Series and Connexion of his own Counsels, he knows many times that those Things we account and desire as Good are really evil , and therefore it is our Wisdom to resign up all our Desires to his disposal , and to say, *Lord*, though such temporal Enjoyments may seem good and desirable to me at present, yet thou art infinitely wise, and thou knowest what the Consequence and Issue of them will be ; I beg them if they may stand with thy Will, and if thou seest they will be as really good for me as I suppose them now to be ; if they be not so, I beg the Favour of a Denial.

This

This is the right Frame that a Christian ought to have upon his Heart when he comes to beg temporal Mercies of God, and whilst he thus asks any worldly Comforts he cannot ask amiss. It was an excellent Saying of the Satyrift, *We ask those Things of God, says he, that please our present Humours and Desires, but God gives those things that are best and fittest for us;* for we are dearer to him, faith the Heathen, than we are to our selves. *And,* says another very well, *it is mercy in God not to hear us when we ask Things that are evil;* and when he refuseth us in such Requests, it is that he might not circumvent us in our own Prayers; for indeed whilst we ask rashly and intemperately whatever we foolishly set our Hearts upon, God need take no other course to plague and punish us, than by hearing and answering of us. So much for the matter of our Prayer, *it must be for Things that are according to God's Will.*

Fourthly, Observe also the manner how our Prayers must be directed unto God. That is,

4.  
How we  
must pray.

3. 10

D d 2

First,

I. First, *We must pray in the Name of Christ.* Before the Fall Man might boldly have gone to God in his own Name, and speak to him upon his own account ; but since the great Breach made betwixt Heaven and Earth, since that great Quarrel and Enmity arose betwixt God and Man, there is no hope of Man's finding acceptance with God upon his own account, and therefore he must go to God in the Name of a *Mediator.* Hence Christ saith, *If ye ask any thing in my Name I will do it for you,* John 14. 31. Now to ask in the Name of Christ, is nothing else but in all our Addresses to God to plead his Merits, and to depend upon his Mediation for the obtaining of those good Things that we desire. It was truly said, *God heareth not Sinners,* John 9. 31. And how then can we who are Sinners, yea, the chiefest of Sinners, hope for audience and acceptance with him who heareth none such ? But yet though God heareth not Sinners, yet he always heareth his Son, who is continually making Intercession for Sinners ; yea, and he always heareth Sinners that come to him in the Name of his Son, and by *Faith tender*

John 9.  
31.

tender up his Merits, through which alone they expect Favour and to prevail with God. All Things go by Favour and Friendship in the Court of Heaven ; if we stand upon our own Merits and Deserts, we shall be shamefully disappointed in our Expectations ; no Merit takes place in Heaven but only the Merit of the Lord Jesus Christ , and whilst we argue that by Faith with God, we come to him in the Name of his Son.

Secondly, *Our Prayers must be put up with Faith.* James 1. 6. Let him ask in <sup>We must</sup> *Faith,* says the Apostle, *nothing wavering;* for let not such a Man, that is, let <sup>pray in</sup> Jam. 1. 6. *not such a Man that wavers,* think to receive any good Thing of God. So in *Heb.* <sup>Heb. 11.6.</sup> 11. 6. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.* Faith is the Souls Hand, whereby it receives those Blessings that God willingly bestows. Now this is the Reason why though we do so often pray to God, yet we are still so indigent and necessitous ; God's Ears are not heavy, his Arms are not shortned, neither are his Bowels dried up ; no, still he hath the same Power,

the same Will, and the same Love to his Children that ever he had ; but we want a Hand to receive those Mercies that God hath a Heart and a Hand to give forth unto us, and that's the reason of our Necessitousness, notwithstanding we do so often come before God in Prayer.

3.  
Prayer  
must be  
with Affe-  
ction and  
Fervency.  
Rom. 12.  
14.

Thirdly, Our Prayers must be put up as with Faith, so with Fervency also ; and therefore it is required that we should be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 14. and so the fore-mentioned place, *The effectual, fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.* We should strive to kindle in our Souls a holy Flame of heavenly Affections when we come to God in Prayer. The Prayers of the Saints were typified under the old Law by Incense, but now no Incense was to be offered up without Fire : So truly there should be no Prayer offered up to God without the Fire and Flame of holy Affections and Fervency. How do you think that a dull and heavy Prayer should mount up as high as Heaven ? Or, that God should hearken or regard what we speak, when we scarce regard what we speak

our

our selves? That for the manner of our Prayer.

Fifthly, We must observe the End that we ought to aim at in our Prayers, and that is the Glory of God, we must pray for those Things that we want, with submission to his Will and with reference to his Glory, that must be the end of our Prayers. Our Design in begging any thing from God, should be that he may have it out of us again in his Service, and to his Honour and Glory; and whilst we propose this to our selves we are like to speed in our Requests. We may well hope our Prayers will be successful when we beg Mercies not to consume them but to husband them, that the encrease of all may return again to God who gave them; and can we think that God will be sparing, when if I may so speak with reverence, it concerns his own Gain to be liberal? Wicked and unthankful Men are but like Vapors and Exhalations drawn up out of the Earth, that do but eclipse the Sun that raises them. So when God raiseth up wicked Men by his Bounty and Goodness, they only serve to eclipse

The End  
of all our  
Prayers  
must be  
the Glory  
of God.

and stain his Glory in the World. Whereas godly Men are like Rivers, that as they receive all their Streams from the Sea, so they return all again into the Sea: So these, whatever they receive from God, they improve all for and return all again unto God. And therefore they may well hope to speed who beg Mercies at the Hand of God, who intend to return all again unto the Glory of God.

So much for the Qualifications of Prayer; it must be made by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, with Faith and Fervency, making an humble representation of our Wants and Desires unto God for those Things that are according to his Will, with submission to his Pleasure, and with reference to his Honour. And thus much for the first Thing, What it is to pray.

2.  
What is  
meant by  
Praying  
without  
ceasing.

The second Thing propounded, was to shew you, *What it is to pray without ceasing.* And this I shall do negatively and positively.

*First,*

First, Negatively. To pray without ceasing is not always to be actually engaged in this Duty of Prayer, either orally, verbally or mentally ; it is not that all other Duties shall be swallowed up and give place unto Prayer. This was an old Error of the *Messalians* and *Euchites*, that began 340 Years after Christ, whose Opinion it was, because here and elsewhere in Scripture we are commanded to *pray continually*, and to *pray always*, and the like, therefore they thought the whole Work of a Christian was only to pray. A most fond and foolish Error ; for what is the great end of Prayer, but that we may thereby obtain that Grace from God that may enable us to perform other Duties of Religion and Holiness. Certainly God doth not blow up one Duty by another ; he that hath commanded us to *pray without ceasing*, hath likewise commanded us to *Hear, Read, Meditate,* and the like ; yea, although Prayer be so spiritual and so heavenly a Duty, yet we are not to neglect the Duties of our particular Callings, only that we may have the more time for Prayer. God hath divided out the Work, and hath

hath given unto every Thing its Season, in which alone it is beautiful. Prayer makes Melody in God's Ears, then only when it is well timed; when we justle out one Duty by another, besides the sinful omission of what we should perform, that which we do perform becomes unacceptable, because unseasonable: Neither can we hope that Prayer will prevail with God, that appears before him guilty of the Death and Murder (if I may so phrase it) of other Duties. This therefore cannot be the meaning of it, that we should do nothing but Pray.

To pray  
without  
ceasing,  
implies  
four  
Things.

Therefore, *Secondly*, Absolutely or Positively, I shall give you a fourfold Interpretation of this Expression of the Apostle, *Pray without ceasing*.

I.  
To pray  
constantly  
and at set  
Times and  
Seasons.  
*Gen. 8.22.*

First, *That may be said to be done without ceasing, that is done constantly and at set Times and Seasons.* So we have the Word used, *Gen. 8.22. While the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, Cold and Heat, Summer and Winter, Day and Night shall not cease:* That is, they shall not cease in their Courses and appointed Times. So here, *Pray without ceasing,*

ceasing ; that is , observe a constant course of Prayer at fixed and appointed Times , still keeping your selves from any superstitious Observations . And thus , Exod. 29. 42. the daily Sacrifice is called there *a continual burnt Offering* ; <sup>Exod. 29. 42.</sup> and yet it was offered up only every Morning and every Evening , and yet God accounts it a continual Offering . So here *Pray continually, or without ceasing* ; that is , keep up frequent and appointed Times for Prayer , without intermission .

Secondly , *To pray without ceasing, is 2. to pray with all importunity and vehemency*. It is to So in Acts 13. 5. the Church is said to pray with all vehemency and importunity . <sup>importunity.</sup> <sup>Acts 13.5.</sup> pray for St. Peter without ceasing ; that is , they were very earnest and importunate , and would give God no rest until he heard them . So also in the Parable of the unjust Steward , which our Saviour spake on purpose to shew how prevalent with God Importunity is , Luke 18. 1. It is said , That the Lord <sup>Luke 18.1</sup> would teach them that they ought to Pray always ; that is , that they ought to pray earnestly and importunately , not giving over till they were heard . So also 1 Sam. 7. 7, 8. the Children of Israel <sup>1 Sam. 7. 8.</sup> entreated

entreathed Samuel not to cease crying to the Lord for them ; that is, that he would improve all his Interest at the Throne of Grace to the utmost in their Behalfs. So we are bid to *Pray without ceasing* ; that is , to be earnest and vehement, resolving to take no Denial at the Hands of God. But yet we must do other Duties also, though we are vehement in this. We may learn how to demean our selves in this case towards God , by *Beggars* that sometimes come to your Doors that oftentimes bring their Work along with them, they beg importunately and yet they work betwixt whiles ; so also should we do, we should beg as importunately of God as if we depended meerly upon his Charity, and yet betwixt whiles we should work as industriously as if we were ourselves to get our Livings with our own Hands.

3. Thirdly, *To pray without ceasing is to take all Occasions, at every turn, to be darting up of our Souls unto God in holy Meditations and Ejaculations.* And this we may and ought to do when we hear or read the Word, or whatever Duty of Religion we are engaged about, yea, this

It is upon all Occasions to be sending up Ejaculations unto God.

this we may and ought to do in our worldly Employments. If your Hearts and Affections be heavenly, your Thoughts will force out a Passage, through the Crowd and Tumult of worldly Businesses, to Heaven ; *Ejaculations* are swift Messengers that require not much time to perform their Errands in, for there is a holy Mystery in pointing our earthly Employments with these *heavenly Ejaculations*, as Men point their Writings sometimes with Stops, ever now and then shooting up a short *mental Prayer* unto Heaven ; such Pauses as these are you will find to be no Impediments to your worldly Affairs. This is the way for a Christian to be retired and private in the midst of a Multitude, to turn his *Shop* or his *Field* into a *Closet* ; to trade for Earth, and yet to get Heaven also into the Bargain. So we read of *Nehemiah* 2. 4. That whilst the King was discoursing to him of the State of *Judea*, it is said that *Nehemiah prayed unto God*; that is, he sent up secret Prayers to God, which tho' they escaped the *King's* notice and observation, yet were they so prevalent as to bow and encline his Heart.

Nehem.2.

4.

*Fourthly,*

4.  
It is al-  
ways to  
keep our  
Hearts in  
a praying  
Frame.

*Fourthly and Lastly,* There is yet something more in this *Praying without ceasing*, and that is this; We may then be said to pray without ceasing, when we keep our Hearts in such a frame, as that we are fit at all times to vent our selves before God in Prayer. When we keep alive and cherish a praying Spirit, and can upon all Opportunities draw near to God with full Souls, and with quick and vigorous Affections: This is *to pray without ceasing*, and this I take to be the most genuine, natural Sense of the Words, and the true Scope of the Apostle here, to have the Habit of Prayer inclining them always freely and sweetly to breath out their Requests unto God, and to take all Occasions to prostrate themselves before his Throne of Grace. Now those that would maintain this praying Temper must be especially careful of Two Things.

They that  
would  
maintain  
a praying  
Temper  
must be  
careful of  
Two  
Things.

I.  
That they  
immerse  
not them-  
selves in  
the World.

First, *That they do not too much ingulf themselves in the Businesses and Pleasures of this Life;* for this will exceedingly damp and deaden the Heart to this holy Duty; as Earth cast upon the Fire puts it out, so the World, when it is spread

spread over the Affections, must needs stifle and extinguish that holy Flame that should ascend upto Heaven. How hard is it for a Man, that oppresseth himself with a heap of Busineses, to raise his Heart unto God under all that Load ? How hard is it for those that let out their Hearts thus too and fro, a thousand ways, to summon them in the next moment to attend upon God, with that awful and serious Frame that becomes all those that appear before him ? When we come to Prayer reeking hot out of the Affairs of this World, we find our Hearts subject to manifold Distractions and Discomposures, and our Thoughts scattered like Bees, still flying from one Flower to another, still bringing some Intelligence from worldly Objects, even then when we are about divine Employments.

Secondly, *If you would maintain a praying Temper of Soul, be careful not to fall into the commission of any known, presumptuous Sin.* The Guilt of Sin lying upon the Conscience, will exceedingly deaden the Heart to Prayer. Alas ! how can we go to God with any freedom of Spirit ? How can we call him Father

2.  
That they  
fall into  
no known  
and pre-  
sumptuous  
Sin.

Father with any Boldness and Confidence, while we are conscious to our selves that we have daringly provoked him by some wilful Offence? I may appeal to your own Experience in this; Do not your Consciences fly in your Faces? Do they not take you by the Throat and even choak your Speech, while you are praying with some such Suggestions as these? What, can I pray for the Pardon of Sin, that frequently commit that which I know to be Sin? Shall I dare to lift up unclean Hands before his pure and holy Eyes, or to speak to him in Prayer, when as those Sins that fancor and fester in my Conscience, must needs make my Breath unsavory and noisome to him? Will the Lord hear such Prayers? Or, if he doth hear them, will he not account them an Abomination? You now, whose Consciences thus accuse you, do you not find such Reflections as these to be great Deadnings to your Hearts, such Damps to Duty, such Clippings of the Wings of the Spirit of God and takings off of the Wheels of the Soul, so that it drives on but slowly and heavily in the performance of that Duty? Certainly Guilt is the greatest Impediment

to

to Duty in the World, for it takes off from the Freeness and Filialness of our Spirits, and fills us with Distrust, Dif-  
fidence and a slavish Fear of coming be-  
fore God, rather as our Judge than as  
our Father. And therefore we find that  
as soon as *Adam* had sinned against his  
Maker, he hides himself from him :  
Yea, and we may observe it in our  
selves, what a slavish dejectedness and  
deadness seizeth upon us when we come  
to God in Duty, after we have wronged  
him by any known Sin ; how doth this  
make us come with such misgiving  
Fears, as if we would not have God to  
take notice that we were in his Pre-  
sence, making us to be continually in  
Pain until the Duty be done ? And thus  
you see what it is to *Pray without ceasing*.  
It is to pray constantly at set Times  
and Seasons, it is to pray importunate-  
ly and vehemently, it is upon all Occa-  
sions to be sending up holy Ejaculations  
unto God, and especially to keep alive  
and cherish a praying Frame of Heart :  
Which whosoever would do he must  
beware of emerging himself in the  
World, and of committing any known  
and presumptuous Sin. And so much  
for the doctrinal part.

Father with any Boldness and Confidence, while we are conscious to our selves that we have daringly provoked him by some wilful Offence? I may appeal to your own Experience in this; Do not your Consciences fly in your Faces? Do they not take you by the Throat and even choak your Speech, while you are praying with some such Suggestions as these? What, can I pray for the Pardon of Sin, that frequently commit that which I know to be Sin? Shall I dare to lift up unclean Hands before his pure and holy Eyes, or to speak to him in Prayer, when as those Sins that rancor and fester in my Conscience, must needs make my Breath unsavory and noisome to him? Will the Lord hear such Prayers? Or, if he doth hear them, will he not account them an Abomination? You now, whose Consciences, thus accuse you, do you not find such Reflections as these to be great Deadnings to your Hearts, such Damps to Duty, such Clippings of the Wings of the Spirit of God and takings off of the Wheels of the Soul, so that it drives on but slowly and heavily in the performance of that Duty? Certainly Guilt is the greatest Impediment

to Duty in the World, for it takes off from the Freeness and Filialness of our Spirits, and fills us with Distrust, Diffidence and a slavish Fear of coming before God, rather as our Judge than as our Father. And therefore we find that as soon as *Adam* had sinned against his Maker, he hides himself from him: Yea, and we may observe it in ourselves, what a slavish dejectedness and deadness seizeth upon us when we come to God in Duty, after we have wronged him by any known Sin; how doth this make us come with such misgiving Fears, as if we would not have God to take notice that we were in his Presence, making us to be continually in Pain until the Duty be done? And thus you see what it is to *Pray without ceasing*. It is to pray constantly at set Times and Seasons, it is to pray importunately and vehemently, it is upon all Occasions to be sending up holy Ejaculations unto God, and especially to keep alive and cherish a praying Frame of Heart: Which whosoever would do he must beware of emerging himself in the World, and of committing any known and presumptuous Sin. And so much for the doctrinal part.

An Exhortation unto Prayer.

The Application shall be to stir us up and excite us to the performance of this Holy Duty, wherein indeed the Vitals of Religion and Holiness do consist: And, to press this upon you, consider with me these following Particulars:

I.  
Prayer is  
a Sign of  
the new  
Birth.

*Acts 9.11.*

First, *Prayer is one of the greatest Signs of a Man's new Birth.* As in the natural Birth we know the Child is living by its Crying when it comes into the World; so also in this spiritual Birth it is an evidence, that we are born living Souls to God, when we cry mightily unto God in Prayer. And therefore in *Acts 9.11.* when God sent *Ananias* unto *Paul*, that he might take off that Fear from him that might otherwise seize upon him in going to such an enraged Persecutor as he was, he tells him *St. Paul* was changed, for *behold he prays.* This is an infallible Sign that we are Children of God, when we can with a Holy Reverence and Boldness cry *Abba, Father.*

2.  
Prayer is  
an inestimable  
Priviledge.

Secondly, *Consider it is a great and inestimable Priviledge, that God will permit us to approach so near to himself; that he will*

will permit such vile Dust and Ashes as we are to speak to him, who is the God of the Spirits of all Flesh. The *holy Angels* in Heaven stand always ministring in the presence of God ; and Prayer doth in some kind associate us with them ; it brings us to lye prostrate at the Feet of God, at whose Feet also *Angels* and all the Powers in Heaven do with much more Humility than we , fall down and worship him ; we and they fall down together at the Feet of the great God, we in Prayer and they in Praises. This Priviledge cost Jesus Christ dear, for it is through him (as the Apostle speaks) *that we have access with boldness unto the Throne of Grace.* All Access thither was barred against Sinners till Christ opened a Passage for us by his own Death and most precious Blood : And shall not we make use of a Priviledge purchased for us at so dear a Rate as that is ? Hath Christ shed his Blood to procure us liberty to pray , and shall not we spend our Breath in praying ? Hath Christ died such a cursed , cruel Death , to purchase liberty for us to pray , and

E e 2 shall

shall we rather choose to die an eternal Death than make use of it ? This is to despise the Blood of Jesus Christ, to offer an high Affront and Indignity unto him, to account it a vile and contemptible Thing , when we make no more esteem of that for the purchase of which he shed his precious Blood. We look upon it as a great Priviledge to have free and frequent access to those that are much our Superiors, and shall we not reckon it a much higher Priviledge that we may at all times approach the presence of him who is *King of Kings* and *Lord of Lords*, and higher than the highest , as we may do at all times in Prayer ?

3.  
Prayer is  
a sove-  
reign Re-  
medy for  
an afflicted  
Mind.

Thirdly, *Prayer it is the most soveraign Medicine and Remedy for an afflicted Mind.* Nothing is so desirable in this World as a faithful Friend, to whom we may at all times unbosom our selves, and make all our Secrets and Grievances known. Now Prayer directs us to go to God himself, he is our most faithful Friend that can best counsel and best help us, and Prayer is a means whereby we reveal the Secrets and Troubles of our Souls unto him ; Prayer it is our dis-

discourfing with God : When our Hearts swell with Grief and are ready to break within us, how sweet is it then to take God apart and give our Hearts vent ? Prayer it is a making our Case known to him, and a spreading our Wants before him , casting all our Burthens upon him who hath promised to sustain us.

Fourthly consider, *Prayer is a means appointed by God for the obtaining of those Blessings and Mercies that we stand in need of*; for all Things are Gods, he is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth ; whether they be spiritual or temporal Mercies that we desire, if it be Wealth, Strength or Wisdom, all are his. If we would have spiritual Blessings conferred upon us, our Faith, our Love, our Patience, our Humility, strengthned and encreased, he is the God of all these Graces, and Prayer it is a means appointed by God to convey all these unto us. Our Prayers, and God's Mercy, are like two Buckets in a Well, while the one ascends, the other descends: So while our Prayers ascend to God in Heaven, his Mercies and Blessings descend down upon us.

5. *Fifthly*, consider, *All our Supplies are only for our present Exigences, to serve us only from Hand to Mouth*; the Stock of Mercy is not ours but God's, he still keeps it in his own Hands, and this he doth that he might keep us in a constant Dependence upon him, and in a constant Expectation of Mercy from him. Our Wants grow up very thick about us, and if we did but observe it, we should find every Day, yea, every Hour, new cause to present new Requests and Supplications unto God, and therefore as our Necessities never cease, so neither should our Prayers.

6. *Sixthly*, consider this, *If you will not be persuaded to pray, you shall one Day be made to howl*. You that will not now look up to Heaven in Prayer, shall hereafter look up in Blaspheming, *Isai. 8. 21*. *They shall fret themselves*, says the Prophet, *and curse God and their King*; that is, in their horrid Despair and Anguish they shall Curse and Blaspheme both God and their King, that is, the Devil, and they shall *look upwards*. Tho' now wicked Men will not look to Heaven, yet then God will force them to look upwards. There

We are always in want, therefore we should pray always.

*They that will not Pray shall Howl.*

*Isai. 8. 21.*

There may Two *Objections* possibly be made against this Duty of Prayer.

First, *God doth before-hand know all our Object. 1.  
Wants and Desires, and therefore what Necessity is there of Prayer?*

To this I answer with St. *Augustine*; Answ.  
*God, says he, doth require that we should pray to him, not so much to make known what our Will and Desire is, for that he cannot be ignorant of; but it is for the exercise of our Desires, and to draw forth our Affections towards those Things that we beg at his Hands, that thereby we may be made fit to receive what he is ready to give.*

Secondly, Say some, *It is in vain to Object. 2.  
pray, because all our Prayers cannot alter the course of God's Providence; we cannot by our most fervent Prayers change the method of God's Decrees; if he hath resolved from Eternity to bestow such a Mercy upon us, we shall receive it whether we pray or pray not; if he hath resolved we shall never partake of it, if we do pray, all our Prayers will be in vain.*

**Answ.**

I have long since Answered this *Objection*, and told you, That it is true, God's Providence is immutable. But the same Providence that orders the End to be obtained, hath likewise ordered the Means by which it must be obtained: As God hath decreed Blessings to us, so he hath decreed that they should be obtained by Prayer; and therefore we must pray that we may obtain those Blessings, for that is the Means God hath decreed for the obtaining of them.

**Directions** Some possibly may say, *If we must how we must Pray thus pray without ceasing, how shall we be so as to be assured that God will hear us? If it be our accepted Duty to pray, how shall we pray so as that our Prayers may become acceptable unto God?* I Answer,

**I.** First, *If you would have God bear you They that when you pray, you must be sure to hear hear God, him when he speaks.* See that place, Prov. God will hearthem. **I. 24, 28.** *Because I have called and you have refused, and have set at nought all my Counsels, therefore, says God, you shall call but I will not answer, you shall seek me early but shall not find me.* God stops

stops his Ears against their Prayers,  
who stop their Ears against his Law.

So you find it, *Prov. 28. 9. He that turneth away his Ears from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be an Abomination:* And this is but Equity with God to refuse to hear them that refuse to hear him. Wherefore should God give attention to us when we Pray, more than we to him when he Speaks?

Secondly, *If you would have God hear you, you must be greatly affected with what you speak your selves; Qui frigide rogat docet negare; He that asks coldly, begs only a Denial.* Certainly we cannot in reason expect that God should regard when we Pray, when we do not regard our selves what we Pray. How do you think a lazy Prayer that scarce drops out of your Lips, should have Strength and Vigour enough to reach Heaven, and to pierce through the Ears of God? If you expect to shoot up a Prayer to Heaven, you must draw it from a Soul full bent.

2.  
Prayer  
must be  
with Affe-  
ction.

Thirdly, *We must come to God with Resolutions to wait for an Answer.* We must not give over Prayer because God doth

3.

We must  
Pray with  
Patience.

doth not presently bestow a Mercy upon us that we desire ; this is not only to lose the Mercy it self, but to lose our Prayers also. God is a great God and King above all Gods, and it is but his due State to be waited long upon ; in this Sense it is true, *He that believeth maketh not haste.* Certainly if we believe God to be infinitely wise to know the best Season to give us what we crave both for his Advantage and for ours also, we shall not be in haste in our Suits, or peevish because we are not strait answered, but patiently wait God's leisure, as knowing that God hath read our Petitions, and will grant them when he seeth the fittest time,

4.  
We must  
not make  
Requests  
for our  
Lusts.

Jam. 4. 2.

Fourthly, *If you would pray so as to be heard, be sure you put up no Requests in the behalf of your Lusts.* The Apostle gives the reason why, of so many Prayers that are put up to God, so few prove successful, James 4. 2. You ask and you receive not, because you ask amiss to consume it upon your Lusts. Now to ask Blessings from God for our Lusts, is when we beg any outward Mercy, be it Wealth or Health, or the like, with reference to the gratifying of our own

own carnal and corrupt Desires; therefore in *James* 4. 4. the Apostle calls them *Adulterers and Adulteresses*: Such Men are indeed like Adulteresses in this; as they ask their Husbands those Things many times, that they bestow upon them that they love better; so wicked Men do many times ask those Mercies and Blessings of God that they intend to spend upon their Lusts that they love better than God, and therefore it is no wonder, that God, who knows their secret Thoughts and Intents, denies them.

Fifthly, You must put some stress upon your Prayers, if you would have them heard and accepted; you must believe that it is to some purpose that you pray: If we think it is of no great concernment to pray, God will think it is of no great concernment to give what we pray for.

Sixthly, You must take heed also, that you do not put too much stress upon your Prayers; that you do not set them up in the stead of Christ, that you do not expect to merit by your Prayers the Things that you pray for, but only look upon

upon them as a Means and Ordinance that God hath appointed to obtain those good Things that you stand in need of.

7. *We must plead the merit of Christ in our Prayers.* Lastly, You must be sure to make Jesus Christ your Friend when you come unto God, or else all your Prayers are no better than scattered in the Air, or spilt in the Carting. Benjamin was a Type of Christ in this respect: Joseph chargeth his Brethren that they should not dare to see his Face again, unless they brought their Brother Benjamin with them. So truly they shall find no Welcome with God, that do not bring their elder Brother Jesus Christ in the Arms of their Faith, and plead his Merit and his Righteousness for the obtaining of their Desires. So much for this Time and Text.

A  
DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
**Omnipresence**  
O F  
**G O D:**  
WITH THE  
Improvements thereof.

FROM  
**PSAL. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.**

---

By **EZEKIEL HOPKINS,**  
Late Lord Bishop of *London-derry.*

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A  
**DISCOURSE**  
 UPON THE  
**Omnipresence**  
 O F  
**G O D:**

**Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.**

*Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea; even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.*

**T**H E S E Words declare to us the glorious Attribute of God's Immensity or Omnipresence, set forth in

most elegant and lofty Terms, as if the Prophet would mitigate that Dread that might well seize upon us, from the consideration of the terrible Majesty of God being so near us, by the sweetnes and flourishing of the Expression, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* This Question doth not imply that David was indeed contriving how to make an Escape from God, nor pondering with himself in what forlorn Corner of the World he might lie obscure, where the Presence of God should never apprehend him; but this Interrogation serveth for a vehement Assertion, *Whither shall I go?* That is, there is no Place where I can go, or where I can imagine to go, but thy Spirit, and thy Presence will be with me. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* That is, either from thee who art a Spirit, and so canst pierce and penetrate me, be as truly and essentially in the very Bowels and Marrow of my Soul, as my Soul is intimately and essentially in my Body. *From thy Spirit;* that is, from thy Knowledge and thy Power; thy Knowledge to detect and observe me, thy Power to uphold or to crush me. In what dark Cerner or Cavern foever I should

should muffle my self, yet thy presence is so universal, that it would find me out, for it stretcheth it self from Heaven to Hell. *If I make my Bed in Hell.* By Hell here, may be meant either the Grave, which is often so called in Scripture, as *Acts 2. 27. Psal. 16. 10. Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption;* (A Prophecy concerning Christ) that is, Thou wilt not leave my Person in the Grave ; so it is interpreted *Verse 31.* when it is said, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither did his Flesh see Corruption ; it is spoken so in *Gen. 37. 35. Jacob,* speaking concerning the supposed Death of his Son *Joseph,* says, *I will go down into the Grave to my Son mourning.* Concerning the Resurrection of Christ from the Grave, *Gen. 37. 35. Job 17. 13.* that word which we translate the Grave, we translate (also) Hell. Now saith the Prophet, Though I should go down to the Grave, and be covered from the sight, and forgotten out of the mind and thoughts of Men, yet thou art there, and observest every Dust how it molders and crumbles away : My Body cannot be more in the Grave than thou art there. If we take

Hell for the place of the damned, God's presence is there likewise : One would think, if from any place God would exclude himself, it should be from Hell, since his presence is sufficient to make an Heaven any where ; but so infinite is his unlimited Being , that when the Body is in the Grave, and the Soul in Hell, yet then is God present, both with the Soul, and with the Body. *If I make my Bed in Hell,* that is, If I cover myself never so close and draw the Curtains of the thickest Darkness round about me; If my Body should lye in the deepest Intrails of the Earth, and my Soul be wrapt about with a Winding-sheet of Smoak and Flames, yet thou art there, and thy presence would soon find me out, *Job 26. 6. Hell is naked before him, and Destruction hath no covering.* Yea, the Apostle tells us, *2 Thess. 1. 9.* That *the Wicked in Hell shall be punished, with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.* That is, not only that their punishment shall be to be separated from the presence of the Lord ; but look how they are said to be punished from the glory of his Power, so likewise are they to be punished from his Presence, their

Destruction shall be from the Glory of his Power ; that is, his Power in inflicting most dreadful Punishments upon them, and his Power in sustaining them under those Punishments, when with one Hand the Lord shall hold them up in Hell, and lift up the other as high as Heaven, to give them redoubled Strokes of everlasting Vengeance. So likewise they shall be punished from the presence of the Lord ; that is, God himself will be present in *Hell* to torment and punish them, that at the very same time that he shall be a cherishing God in Heaven, he will be a tormenting God in Hell : because in them he hath established his two great Thrones, the one of his Mercy, the other of his Justice. But yet possibly there may be found some neglected place here below, where God hath no such concernment to be present in it, as he hath to be present in *Heaven* and in *Hell*. Now faith the Psalmist, Verse 9. *If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall thine Hand lead me, and thy Right-hand shall hold me.* *Wings of the Morning* is an elegant Metaphor, and by them we may conjecture is meant the Sun-beams, called

F f 2      Wings

Wings, because of their swift and speedy motion, making their passage so sudden and so instantaneous, as that they do prevent the observation of the Eye, called *the Wings of the Morning*, because the Dawn of the Morning comes flying in upon these Wings of the Sun, and brings Light along with it, and by beating and fanning of these Wings scatters the Darkness before it. Now, saith the *Psalmist*, If I could pluck these *Wings of the Morning, the Sun-beams*; if I could imp my own Shoulders with them; if I should fly as far and as swift as Light, even in an instant, *to the uttermost parts of the Sea*; yea, if in my flight I could spy out some Solitary Rock, so formidable and dismal as if we might almost call in question whether ever a *Providence* had been there; if I could pitch there on the top of it, where never any thing had made its abode, but Coldness, Thunders and Tempests, yet there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right-hand shall hold me.

Thus you see the Text declares this Ubiquity and Omnipresence of God, both in Heaven and Earth and Hell, and in all Places and in all Things.

I shall

I shall first handle this Point Doctrinally, and then Practically, observing this Method: I shall,

1. Lay down some Positions.
2. Demonstrate the Truth of them by some cogent and convincing Arguments.
3. Answer some Objections which may be made against the Omnipresence of God.
4. Make some Improvement of this Point.

The first Position I shall lay down is <sup>Position 1.</sup> this, *That God is intimately and essentially in all parts and places of the World;* yea, this Presence being essential is also necessary, so that it is simply impossible that God should not be wheresoever the Creature is. By the World, I mean whatsoever was at the beginning created by the Power of God, the Heavens, the Air, the Earth and Sea, and all things visible and invisible; God is with them and in them all. There are three things briefly to be touched upon here.

I. First, *That God is intimately present with the Creatures.* He passeth through their very Beings and Inward Parts; he is in the very Center of their Essence; and this flows from the Spirituality of his Essence. From hence it is that it is impossible that he should be excluded out of the most close compacted Being. Bodies cannot thus enter one another, because of their gross and material Substances; they can only stand without and knock for admission; they cannot enter into the substance one of another: Water, when sucked up by a Spunge, doth not pass into the substantial part of it, but only fills up those Caverns and hollow Pores that were before filled with Air. The *Air* we breath in cannot enter into the Substance of our Bodies, but only into those Pores and hollow Recesses that are by Nature fitted to receive it; so of all other Corporeal Beings. But *Spirits* are not tied up to this Law. The Soul of Man, because it is a *Spirit*, resides not only in the empty void Spaces of the *Body*, but also in the midst of the most solid and substantial part of it. *Angels*, who are a degree of Spiritual Beings above the Soul,

Soul, they cannot be excluded from being present in the most condensed Bodies; and we know not how often they are in us; we know not how often they pass through us, nor how many of them are now present with us. We read of no less than a *Legion*, which is Six Thousand, that quartered themselves together in one possessed person, *Mark* 5. 9. Then, certainly God, between whom and the *Angels* there is infinitely more distance than between *Angels* and Bodies, cannot possibly be shut out of any Being, but diffuseth himself to every part of his Creatures.

Secondly, *God is not only intimately present with his Creatures, because as he is a Spirit he passeth through the most inmost part of them, but he is intimately present with all his Creatures at once.* And therein is his presence distinguished from the presence of *Angels*; they indeed pass from one to another, and be one in another; they may possibly stretch and dilate themselves to a great compafs, but they cannot stretch themselves to an *Ubiquitarieness*, to be in all Beings at once. If an *Angel* suddenly dart himself from one Point of the Heavens, through the

2.

Center of the Earth, to an opposite Point of the Heavens, and by a motion of insinuation, without impelling or driving the Air before him, yet he is not in Heaven and Earth at once, but when he is in one place he ceaseth to be in another; but it is not so with God, for he is every-where and in all things at once for ever, therefore God tells us, *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth,* Jer. 23. 24. He is so in them, as that he doth not leave any one place void or empty of himself, for were there any places where God were not, then it could not be properly said to be filled with him.

3. *Thirdly*, This Omnipresence of God is simply necessary, not only for the preserving and upholding of his Creatures in their Beings and Operations, but necessary to our very Beings; for his own Essence is simple, and he cannot withdraw from, nor forsake any place, or any thing with which his presence now is. God cannot contract and lessen himself, nor gather up his *Essence* into a narrow room and compass; but as he is here in this very place which we now take up, so he must and will be  
here

here to all Eternity. Nor is this any imperfection, as if God were not an Infinite Perfection and Excellence, for this flows from the immutability of his Nature and Essence; for should God remove himself, he were not altogether unchangeable, but *with him there is neither change nor shadow of turning*, Jam. 1. What the *Heathens* thought of this *Inmensity* and *Omnipresence* of God, it is somewhat obscure, some of them confined him to Heaven, and were so far from affirming him present in all things, that they thought he took no care of any thing below, as being too mean and too unworthy for God to regard. This was the Opinion of the *Epicureans*, *Acts* 17. 18. Others thought indeed, that the Care and Providence of God reached to these ordinary things, but not his Essence; and the ground of their Errour was, because they thought it most befitting the *Majesty* of God, to sit only in Heaven, a glorious and a becoming place, and not to make himself so cheap and so common, as to be present with Men and the Vile Things of the World: But this is a weak Reason, as I shall shew anon. Some others among the *Heathens* had righter Apprehensions

henfions of this Divine Attribute; one of them, being to give a Description what God was, tells us most admirably, *God was a Sphere, whose Center was everywhere, and whose Circumference was nowhere.* A raised apprehension of the Divine Nature in an *Heathen*. And another, being demanded what God was, made answer, That God is an Infinite Point, than which nothing can be said more (almost) or truer, to declare this *Omnipresence* of God. It is reported of *Heraclitus* the *Philosopher*, when his Friend came to visit him, being in an old rotten *Hovel*, *Come in, come in,* (saith he) *for God is here.* God is in the meanest *Cottage* as well as in the stately *Palace*; the poorest *Beggar* cohabits with God as well as the greatest *Princes*, for God is every-where present and sees all things.

**Position 2.** *God is not only present in the World, but he is infinitely existent also without the World, and beyond all things but himself.* He is in all that Vast Tract of Nothing which we can imagine, and beyond the Highest Heavens: What Reason can say for this, I shall anon shew. In the mean time see that one positive place

place of Scripture, *1. Kings 8. 27.* Behold the Heavens and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him. And if God be not contained in them, certainly he then must be infinitely beyond and above them: He surmounts the Heaven of Heavens, that is, the very highest and uppermost Heavens, which St. Paul calls the *Third Heaven*, *2 Cor. 12.* That glorious Place in which God doth most specially manifest himself and will do to all Eternity. The Scripture tells us, that though the *Heaven* of the glorified Angels and Saints be the place in which God will especially manifest his presence, yet it is not that place unto which God will or doth confine his presence. *Isai. 66. 1, 2.* *Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool. Where is the House that ye build unto me? and where is the Place of my Rest? For all those things hath mine Hand made.* As if God should have said, Do not think to cloister me up within the Walls of the *Temple*; no, I am set upon the highest Heavens, as upon my Throne, and they are all under me, and I am exalted far above them. Many such glorious Expressions there are of God's Infiniteness and Immensity

scat-

scattered up and down the *Scripture*, which I shall not now spend time to recollect: The *Scripture*, you see, owns it for a truth, That God is Infinite in his *Essence* beyond the whole World, which is one of those Divine Properties which poseth *Reason* to conceive, how it is possible, that since beyond the World there is nothing, *that God should exist there*; but though *Reason* cannot apprehend it, yet from *Reason*, as well as from *Scripture*, it appears it must be so.

**Position 3.** *As God exists every-where, so all and whole God exists every-where.* So that all God is here, and all God is there, and all God is in every place, and in every thing: This is indeed a great and most unconceivable Mystery, but yet it must needs be so, because God is indivisible and simple and not compounded of Parts; and therefore where-ever there is any of God's *Essence*, there is all his *Essence*, otherwise part of his *Essence* would be here, and part there, and part of it elsewhere, which would be utterly repugnant to the simple and uncompounded Nature of God. God's Attributes are his *Essence*: Now there is no where,

where, where God is, but there are all his Attributes, and therefore where God is there is all his *Essence*. He is a *Spirit*, *most Wise*, *most Powerful*, *most Just*, and the like, here and there, as well as in Heaven above ; yea, and what is more, to the astonishment of Reason, than all this, God is every-where Omnipresent, and in every place. And though it be common to all Spiritual Beings, because they have no parts, to have a *totality* in the whole, and a *totality* in every part : (Indeed it is expressed in the Schools, that Spirits are all in the whole, and all in every part;) yet herein God hath a peculiar way of subsisting from other Spirits, that not only his *Essence* alone is in every part of the World, but also his Presence is in all and every part of the World : So that God is every where present, which is beyond the reach of our apprehensions ; yet it is undoubtedly true, for God's Omnipresence being that Attribute which belongs to him, he is present every-where and in all things.

Now for the Rational Demonstrations whereby it may be evinced, that God is Omnipresent.

That

That God is present every-where in this World, that I shall make good by these Arguments:

1. *Argument 1.* First from his Unchangeableness, thus: If there be any place where God is not, then God may be there, because he is Omnipotent; but if God may be there, where he is not actually also, then it must be by motion to that place; but it is impossible that God should be able to move from one place to another, because he is immutable: Therefore hence it clearly follows, that there is no place where God is not, and where he was not from all Eternity.

2. *Arg. 2.* It may be demonstrated, *That God is Omnipresent from his preservation of all things in their beings.* Thus God is present with whatsoever he preserves, but he preserves every thing in its being, therefore he is present every-where. There is required as great a Power to preserve Creatures from falling back into their first nothing, as there was to make them at first out of nothing; for Preservation, as the *Philosopher* speaks, is nothing else but a continued and a pro-

prolonged Creation. Now he cannot create any thing at a distance from it, because no Creature is fit to convey a Creative Action, and because also what ever Virtue or Power is in God it is his Essence ; therefore if he create or preserve by his Power, he creates and preserves immediately by his Essence, and so his Essence must be whatsoever his Operations are. But God exists not only in the World, but infinitely beyond the World also, that may be demonstrated thus :

1. First, From the *Infiniteness of his Nature and Essence.*
2. Secondly, From the *Infiniteness of his Perfections.*

*Arg. 1.* First, From the *Infiniteness of God's Nature or Essence.* That Nature, which is infinite, cannot be bounded or limited ; but God's Nature is infinite, therefore it cannot be bounded ; but if God were only present in the World and did not exist infinitely beyond it, then his Being and Nature could not be infinite as a Spirit is infinite ; therefore if God should be included in the World, he would also be but infinite as the World.

*Arg.*

*Arg. 2.* Secondly, From the *Infinite-ness of his Perfections*, we may argue thus: That which is infinitely perfect, must be infinitely great, but God is infinitely perfect; so that there is no Perfection which we can imagine but is eminently in God, therefore he must be infinitely great, so as there can be no space which we can imagine, but he must be present in it: But we can imagine an infinite space beyond this World, therefore God is there, because there is no Perfection imaginable which God hath not. Whatever is infinitely perfect, must be infinitely great, as appears from this, because the greater a thing is, the more perfect it is of that same kind, as a great piece of *Gold* is more excellent than a less; and therefore from this Perfection of God, it appears, that he is *every-where*, he being all Perfection.

2. *Arg. 2.* As it is demonstrated from God's Infiniteness and Perfection, so likewise from his Almighty Power, God can create another World greater than this, even in that imaginary space which we can conceive beyond this World; therefore certainly God is now existent there.

*Arg.*

Arg. 3. God's Omnipresence may be argued from the Eternity of God. God was infinitely existent before the Creation of the World, since he is Eternal, and the World but Temporal; the World hath stood only but some few Thousands of Years, and before the Creation of the World there was nothing but God; and God existed eternally in himself; therefore, though beyond this World there be nothing, yet God will be there actually existing in that same imaginary space beyond this World, as he did exist in an imaginary space before this World was created.

3.

Thus I have done with the Propositions, and the Confirmation of them by the rational Arguments, those things that relate to the *Philosophical Part* of the *Text*, for informing of the Judgment in the Notion of that stupendious Attribute of God's Omnipresence.

I shall now come to answer some Objections: The first is taken from those Scriptures where it seems to be implied, that God moves from place to place, as in Gen. 18. 21. where the

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Lord faith, concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether, according to the cry of it, which is come unto me. And in Hab. 3. 3. it is there said, God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran, &c.

Object. 1.

Now these places which speak of going to, and departing from places, seem to oppose God's Ubiquity, because Motion is inconsistent with God's Omnipresence.

Answ.

I answer: These and the like Scriptures are not to be taken properly and literally, but as accommodate to our capacity and conception, even as Parents, when they speak to their little Children, will sometimes lisp and babble in their Language; so God oftentimes descends to us in speaking our Language, for the declaring of those things which are far above our reach. But you will say, how are such Places to be understood? I answer, When God is said to come unto, or to depart from any Place or Person, nothing else must be understood thereby, but a declaring or not declaring himself to be pre-

present, as Men, when they manifest themselves present, they do it by moving hither or thither; so God, to accommodate himself thereunto, when he manifests his presence any where, he tells us, that he goes thither; and when that Manifestation ceaseth, he tells us he departs thence, though he was always there present, both before and after that Manifestation. So that these Expressions used in the *Scripture*, concerning God, though spoken after the manner of Men, yet they must be understood after the manner of God, that is, with a suitableness and conformity to his infinite Essence.

The *Scripture* tells us, that hereafter Object. 2.  
in Heaven we shall see God as he is: But  
is not that impossible? If God be an om-  
nipresent God, we shall not be able to  
comprehend him, because we shall not our-  
selves be infinite in Heaven; and if Man  
be styled finite, how then can he com-  
prehend what is infinite, since infinite  
is comprehended of nothing but that  
which is infinite?

I answer, Such *Scriptures* are not to Answ:  
be understood, as if the Capacities of An-

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gels, much less of Men, are or ever shall be wide and capacious enough to contain the infinite greatness of God; no, his Omnipresence is not comprehended by Angels themselves, nor shall be by Man for ever; but it must be understood comparatively. Our Vision and Sight of God here, is but through a Glass darkly; but in Heaven it shall be with so much more brightness and clearness, that in comparison of the obscure and glimmering way whereby we know God here, it may be called a seeing of him Face to Face, and knowing him as we are known by him; though, to speak in absolute Propriety of Speech, these things are not possible to any Creature.

*Object. 3. It may seem no small disparagement to God to be every-where present; What! for the Glorious Majesty of God to be present in such vile and filthy Places as are here upon Earth?*

*Answ. 1. To this I answer, God doth not think it any disparagement to him, nor think it unworthy of him to know and make all these which we call vile and filthy places; why then should we think it*

it unworthy of him to be present there?

God is a Spirit, and is not capable of any pollution or defilement from any vile or filthy things. The *Sun-beams* are no more tainted by shining on a *Dunghil*, than they are by shining on a Bed of Spices ; no more can God be fullied by being present in filthy Sinks, (to speak with Reverence) than to be in the glorious Heavens, because he is a Spirit, and his Essence is not subject to any taints from the Creature.

The vilest things that are, have still a being that is good in their own kind, and as well-pleasing to God as those things which we put a greater value and esteem upon.

Lastly, It reflects no more dishonour upon God to be present with the vilest Creatures, than to be present with the noblest and highest ; because the *Angels* are at an infinite distance from God. There is a greater disproportion between God and the *Angels*, than there is between the vilest Worm and an *Angel* ; all are at an infinite distance to his Glory and Majesty. Thus much for the *Objections.*      G g 3      A P-

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*A P P L I C A T I O N.*

*Use I.* First, *Is God thus infinitely present every-where, and thus in and with all his Creatures, then what an Encouragement is here unto Prayer?* Thou canst not say, Alas! I now pray, but how shall God hear? He is in Heaven above, and I am on Earth below, many Thousands of Miles distant from his presence: How then shall my weak Whisperings, that can scarce reach the Walls of mine own Closet, ever be able to reach his Ear? No, God's Essential Presence is with thee wheresoever thou art, as he is in Heaven it self; and God is all Ear, he can understand the silent Motions of thy Lips every-where, yea, he can understand the secret Motions of thy Heart. When *Hannah* prayed for her Son *Samuel*, *Eli*, the Priest of God, thought her Gesture did proceed from a distempered Head, and not from an holy Heart; but God was present with her Lips, and that Prayer which was thought by the Priest of God to be but a dumb shew, yet to God himself it was powerful Rhetorick and as loud as Thunder in his Ears. The Scripture gene-

generally intimates that all our Prayers shall be directed to God in Heaven. So Solomon prayed, *1 Kings 8. 32. Then bear thou in Heaven, &c.* And it is again expressed in the 30th Verse. So that most excellent Composure which Christ taught his Disciples in the beginning of it, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*, it gives our thoughts a Lift to Heaven. Now this doth not imply, that God doth no where hear our Prayers, but only in Heaven. But how then? Why is this Phrase used? For these two Reasons :

First, Because Heaven is the most glorious place; there God especially hath established his Throne of Grace, and sits upon it. Now, because it is most Glorious and Majestick, and since God is there to hear Suits and receive Petitions, that are tendred up by all his Servants here on Earth, therefore the Scripture directeth us to that most glorious and celestial place, *Hear thou in Heaven.* Hence we have that Expression, *Acts 10. 4. Thy Prayers and thine Alms are come up for a Memorial before God.* Certainly, if our Prayers should not be heard till they come to Heaven,

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they are so weak and faint, that they would be out of breath by the way, and not be able then to speak for themselves: But yet God speaks in us by his Spirit, and keeps alive the Sense of his Majesty upon our Hearts, that he would not have us think it to be a mean and trivial thing to have our Prayers heard; therefore he represents himself to us Arrayed in all his Glory.

Secondly, Our Prayers are directed to God in Heaven, because though he hears them where-ever they be uttered yet he no where hears them with acceptance but in Heaven only. Our Prayers are accepted by God because they are heard in Heaven. Thy Prayers are not accepted by God because God hears them upon Earth, as they are heard in thy *Closet*, or as they are heard in thy Heart, but only as they are heard in Heaven; and the reason is, because that Prayers are acceptable only as they are presented before God in the Mediation and Intercession of Jesus Christ. He must mingle them with the Incense of his Merits, before they can ascend up before God as a sweet Savour. Now Christ performs his *Mediatory Office* nowhere

where but in Heaven ; for though, as God, he be every-where present, as the *Father* is, and therefore hears your Prayers wheresoever they be put up ; yet, as *Mediator*, they are only heard in Heaven by him ; and he hears no Prayers, but the Prayers of his People, as he is *Mediator* ; and therefore it is no comfort to you, that Christ hears your Prayers, as he is God only, for so he doth, and cannot but do it, unless he hears your Prayers likewise as he is *Mediator*. Now Christ, as he is *Mediator*, he is God-man, for as he wrought out our Salvation in both Natures, so he still continues to mediate for us in both Natures : And since the Human Nature is only in Heaven, therefore it follows, he performs the Mediatory Office only in Heaven. Now it is the Mediatorship of Christ alone that makes all our Prayers and Duties acceptable to God himself, therefore it concerns us still to pray, *Lord, hear us in Heaven*. It is in vain that thou hearest me on Earth, unless thou hearest in Heaven too. My Prayers cannot be heard acceptably, unless thou hearest them twice ; thou hearest my Prayers on Earth ; not a Word of my Tongue but thou hearest ;

est ; but what will it avail thy Servant, unless thou hearest my Prayers a second time repeated over to thee in the Intercession and Mediation of Jesus Christ in Heaven ? And therefore, saith Solomon, *1 Kings 8. 34. Hear thou in Heaven, and forgive.* When God shall only hear on Earth, he will be so far from forgiving, that he will be avenged ; but when he hears our Prayers in Heaven, through the Mediation of Christ, then he is inclined to forgive and pardon us. Hence we find, that the Jews prayed towards the *Temple*, which was a Type of Heaven, and the *Altar* and *Incense* and *Mercy-seat* in this *Temple* were Types of Christ, who is now in Heaven. And therefore *Daniel*, when in *Babilon*, *he prayed, his Window being open towards Jerusalem*, towards the *Temple* ; as if no Prayer were acceptable to God, but what was heard in Heaven. So *Jonah*, when he was in the Belly of the *Whale*, *Jonah 2. 7. My Prayer came in unto thee, into thine Holy Temple.* *Jonah* was a strong Orator when he was in the slimy Paunch of the Whale ; yea, but God was there, and God heard him there ; but yet his Prayer would have been as filthy as his

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Person, if God had not heard him elsewhere than in the Belly of the Whale. *My Prayer came in unto thee, into thine Holy Temple.* That is, God heard him in Heaven. And therefore, though the Breath of *Jonah* could have no sweetness, yet the Prayer that he breathed forth, came up as Incense and a sweet Perfume before God as it came into the Holy Temple. Thus God hears the Prayers of his in Heaven; but the Prayers of the wicked he hears only upon Earth; he hears them when they speak them, but God never hears their Prayers in the Mediation of Christ; but the Prayers of his own People he hears on Earth, as he is an omnipresent and omnipotent God; and he hears them in Heaven as he is a gracious and reconciled Father. If thou dost but Whisper thy Prayer, God will hear it; that which is but whispered on Earth, it rings and echo's in the Court of Heaven; and if Christ speaks your Prayers over to God, they become so loud, that God cannot stop his Ears against them. The Voice of Prayer is not like other Voices, the further they reach the weaker they grow; no, that Voice which is so weak that it cannot be

be heard beyond the compass of thy  
*Closet*, yet when it is put forth in Prayer,  
it fills all Heaven with its sound. But  
where is the encouragement unto Pray-  
er in all this? If thou dost belong to  
God, thou may'st have great encou-  
ragement to Prayer from the Conside-  
ration of his *Omnipresence*; for because  
of this there is no Prayer of a Child of  
God but shall be heard in Heaven tho'  
it be uttered in secret: For consider,  
that tho' Christ, as Man, is only in  
Heaven, yet Christ, as God, is every-  
where present, and hears the Prayers  
of all Men in the World. Those that  
are wicked he regards no further, but  
gives them the hearing; but for his  
own, he regards their Prayers, and pre-  
sents what he hears from them to God  
in Heaven; Christ makes his Omni-  
science and Omnipresence to be subser-  
vient to the Work of his Mediatorship:  
One of his Offices is to be a faithful  
High-Priest and an Advocate to God  
for us; and Christ being such an Ad-  
vocate, that hears all the Suits and all  
the Causes of his Clients, we may be  
assured, that there is not one Prayer  
that God hears on Earth from us, but  
he hears it also in Heaven, through  
Christ.

Christ. It was a notable Scoff of Elijah to Baal's Priests, 1 Kings 18. 27. *Cry aloud, for he is a God, &c. peradventure he sleepeth and must be waked.* As if he should say, You serve an unworthy God, that cannot hear those that pray unto him. And indeed how should he do so, that is not Omnipresent? *He is talking, or he is pursuing, or travelling;* *Cry! Cry aloud!* and, peradventure, if he sleepeth, that will awaken him. But though you should cry never so loud, though your Cry should reach from Earth to Heaven, he would be silent; such a God as yours could never hear. And therefore when Elijah himself came to pray, Verse 36. the Text doth not tell us he cried aloud, but that he came neer. But when Baal's Priests roared and howled, like distracted Men, and cut themselves in an idolatrous manner, Baal is not prevailed with to hear them. Now, Elijah came near; that is, he came in a calm and sedate manner, and pour'd out his fervent composure to God, as knowing, that that God whom he prayed to, is present every-where. The Voice in Prayer is necessary upon a threefold Account:

First,

1. First, As it is that which God requires should be employed in his Service, for this is the great end why our Tongues were given to us, that by them we might bless and serve God,  
*James 3. 9.*

2. Secondly, When in private it may be a Help and Means to raise up our own Affections and Devotions, then the Voice is requisite, keeping it still within the bounds of decency or privacy.

3. Thirdly, In our joyning also with others, it is a help likewise to raise and quicken their Affections; otherwise, were it not for these three Reasons, the Voice is no more necessary to make known our Wants to God, than it is to make them known to our own Hearts; for God is always in us and with us, and knows what we have need of before we ask it.

Use 2. Secondly, As the Consideration of God's Omnipresence should encourage us in Prayer, as knowing that God certainly hears us, so it should affect us with a Holy Awe and Reverence

rence of God in all our Prayers and Duties, and in the whole Course of our Lives and Conversations. Certainly it is an excellent Meditation to prepare our Hearts to Duty, and to compose them in Duty, to be much pondering the *Omnipresence* of God, to think that I am with God, he is present in the Room with me, even in the Congregation with me, and likewise in my Closet, and in all my Converse and Dealings in the World: How can it be possible for that Man to be frothy and vain, that keeps this Thought alive in his Heart? If the Presence of some Earthly Person strike an Awe in our Hearts when we come before them, how much more should the Consideration of God's Presence affect us with an Holy Fear? Suppose an *Angel* should fly in the midst of us, that are here present, with a rushing and dazzling Glory, how would it make all our Hearts beat and throb within us? It would make us soon abandon all those vain Thoughts that now we feed upon, those Thoughts that eat out the Heart and Life of Duty; how much more should it affect us and fill us with Holy Fear, that God is now and always in the midst of us,

whose

whose Glory stains and sullies the Beauty, and extinguishes the Light of Angels. Oh! that God, that is always present with us, should be worshipped and served with a Holy Fear, and remembered with the greatest Veneration. Now, to imprint this the more deeply, I shall suggest two or three Particulars.

1. *First, Because God is in all things, therefore he sees and knows all things.* The Omniscience of God is grounded upon his Omnipresence, *Jer. 23. 24. Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord; do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord?* Nothing in Heaven or Earth can be hid or concealed from God's Eye, *Heb. 4. 13. All things are naked and opened before the Lord.* There is no Corner so retired, so shady, so dark, no Gulph so deep, that can hide any thing from the piercing discovery of his Eye: He knows our Thoughts, those Nimble and those Spiritual Things, that are so quick in their flight that they cannot be seized upon by any Creature in the World; God knows them, the Devil cannot know them, nor can an Angel know

know them ; yet God discerns our Thoughts more clearly than we can discern the Faces of one another ; he sees our *Thoughts afar off*, as the *Psalmist* tells us ; he sees our Thoughts in their first Conception, when they first begin to heave in our Breasts ; he knows the least Windings and Turnings of our Souls. Now would not this compose us to an habitual and holy Awe of God, to be continually thinking that whatsoever we do, God's Eye is now upon us ? Let every one say within himself, Where-ever I am, or what-ever I do, I am in the Presence of the Holy God, who takes notice of all my Carriages ; there is not a Glance of mine Eye, but his Eye observes it ; there is not an irreverent or unseemly Gesture, but he takes notice of it ; there is not a Thought of mine can escape, but he knows that Thought ; and *he knows my Down-lying and Up-rising*, &c. Let this Consideration season your Lives and Conversations ; be still pondering in your Minds, That whatsoever you are doing, his Eye is upon you, and he is present with you.

2. Secondly, Consider, That God not only sees into all you do, but he sees it to that very end that he may examine and search into it. He doth not only behold you with a common and indifferent Look, but with a searching, watchful and inquisitive Eye ; he pries into the Reasons, the Motives, the Ends of all your Actions. *Psal. 11. 4.* it is said, *The Lord's Throne is in Heaven ; his Eyes behold, his Eye-lids try the Children of Men.* *Rev. 1. 14.* where Christ is described, it is said, *His Eyes are as a Flame of Fire.* You know the Property of Fire is to search and make trial of those things that are exposed unto it, and to separate the Dross from the pure Metal : So God's Eye is like Fire, to try and examine the Actions of Men ; he knows and discerns how much your very purest Duties have in them of mixture and base ends of Formality, Hypocrisie, Distractedness and Deadness ; he sees through all your Specious Pretences, that which you cast as a Mist before the Eyes of Men, when yet thou art but a Juggler in Religion ; all your Tricks and Sleights of Outward Profession, all those things that you use to

to cozen and delude Men withal, they cannot possibly impose upon him; he is a God that can look through all those Fig-leaves of Outward Profession, and discern the Nakedness of your Duties through them. In the last place,

Thirdly, *God tries all your Cases and Actions, in order to an Eternal Judgment and Sentence to be passed upon them.* This Consideration might damp the stoutest Sinner's Heart in the whole World. Believe it, Sirs, God doth not only see your ways, but he sees them so as to remember them against you another day ; though you have forgot what you have thought and what you have spoken, and what you have done, yet God for ever remembers them, and at that day he will sadly recall all these things again to your remembrance. Oh ! that therefore this might prevail with you so to do every thing, as being now already under the Eye of God , and shortly must be under his Doom and Sentence. Now if God should send an Angel to stand at our Backs, and tell us whatever we are doing, this Action of ours we must be judged for ; it should make us fearful of sinning , as

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that Angel himself. True, we have no such Monitor, but our Conscience performs to us the same Office: Therefore charge it upon your Consciences, that they still put you in mind of God; that he sees you; that he will judge you; and that he always looks upon you, and writes down in those Eternal Leaves of his Memorial-Book, whatsoever proceeds from you, either in Duties of Religion, or the Actions of your Ordinary Course and Conversation: Therefore, because he is Omnipresent and sees all things, stand in awe of his Omnipresence, whereby he sees whatsoever we do, and whereby he will try and judge us at the last day.

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